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Mastering Yourself

How To Align Your Life With Your True
Calling & Reach Your Full Potential



“Mastering others is strength, mastering yourself makes you fearless.” ~ Lao Tzu

COREY WAYNE

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MASTERING YOURSELF

**How To Align Your Life With Your True Calling &
Reach Your Full Potential**

By

Corey Wayne

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HONOR

This book is dedicated to the American soldier. No matter whether the cause is popular or not, I am in awe of the fact that when their country calls them, they go, and they go willingly. They take our place on the battlefield, risking everything they have, because it is part of who they are. They all are my heroes and I owe all of my success, happiness, and opportunities to past, present, and future generations of their kind. May God keep them safe and speed the day to us when their sacrifice is no longer required because humanity has learned that the real enemy is hatred itself and the way to real happiness is unconditional love. Until that day comes I take great pride and comfort in knowing they will continue to stand up and show us what real honor and integrity is. I dedicate my life to helping bring humanity closer together, and always giving my gifts to the world in hopes that I may honor all of their collective sacrifices so they are not in vain.

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I would like to thank my mother who taught me to be so determined and never give up no matter what. I would also like to thank Tony Robbins for being such a great leader and mentor in my life. I'd like to thank my dad for teaching me the difference between right and wrong. I am grateful for the close relationship we have today – I love you very much. To my aunt Char and Uncle Richie, I love you both! I also would like my brother Chris to know how proud I am to have you as my brother. All you have gone through to achieve your dreams is inspiring to me. I love you very much.

To my awesome team who keeps my business running, growing, balanced, prosperous, stable and successful, thanks for being awesome and everything you do to go above and beyond what is asked of you! I couldn't do it without you!

I would also like to express my gratitude to you, the reader. You are embarking on a continuing journey that will change the world. By becoming the best version of yourself that you are on the inside and reaching your full potential, you unconsciously give permission to all others around you to do the same. This will continue to impact society for generations to come and start reducing the amount of people in society who are living lives of quiet desperation, mediocrity and less than they are capable of living. Instead of a world where most people are simply existing and trying to get through the workweek, it will be replaced by a world where collectively, people are making it a better place because they have come alive on the inside by being in total alignment with their true purpose and calling.

Just imagine how much more awesome, prosperous, happy, safe and exciting the world will be when high achievers and visionaries like Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Larry Page, Sergey Brin, et al., are abundant and commonplace instead of unicorns and exceptions to the rule.

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Introduction

“For a man to conquer himself is the first and noblest of all victories.” ~ Plato

There are important questions everyone has to answer, and they have to answer them continuously, over the course of their lives, to themselves. The most important of these questions are: What is my purpose, who am I, and what kind of life and lifestyle do I want to create for myself?

Most people never ask these kinds of questions with any real focus, heart, or intent because they are so fixated on getting through the week and just trying to earn a living.

They tend to dabble in different things, but never really focus on becoming the master of anything in particular, much less their own lives. The fact that you are reading this book is indicative that you are one of the 3% of human beings who want more from life.

You don't simply want to exist and get through it; you want to thrive and experience the best that life has to offer.

You are a high achiever. This does not mean you are focused on working yourself to death, or spending your life in an office stuck in the same cubicle every day. You work to live, you don't live to work. You are not your everyday average Joe or Jane, you want to be exceptional or you wouldn't have picked up this book in the first place.

I have spent my life seeking answers, techniques, strategies and wisdom to help me achieve the kind of life and lifestyle that feels

authentic, and that gives me the freedom and ability to explore my heart, experience what I want, and be who I really am.

“The secret of happiness is freedom, and the secret of freedom is courage.”

~ Thucydides (471 BC – 400 BC)

Success is a never-ending process of seeking, experiencing, trial and error, and refining one’s approach to creating the ideal life and lifestyle that is pleasing to you.

I am now 47 and have always followed my heart and what felt right for me. Anytime I ignored or went against my internal compass, I have struggled, become unhappy and the results have been less than ideal. However, in a world that is always trying to get you to conform and be like everyone else, being who you really are is not always easy or acceptable to everyone else.

There is never a shortage of people who think they know better how you should live your life, what you should believe, and who you should become.

As I have grown older, following and trusting my heart has become easier and the results have started to follow effortlessly. There have been plenty of ups and downs, but when I look back upon my life, I can see the magic and synchronicity lining up people, places, events and experiences that were perfect, and right on time for the next step to get me to where I am today.

I have no regrets in life. The reason I wrote this book is to detail my journey. I want to share the story of how I learned to master my emotions, thoughts, mindsets and skills to achieve and experience a life that most people only dream of, or read about others experiencing.

As a life coach, it is easy for me to help others achieve the same results in their own lives that I have achieved in mine – if they are willing to take relentless consistent action to move their lives forward.

You must participate in your own rescue. No one can save you or do it for you, but the person you see in the mirror every day. Life is a journey. Success is a process. Being successful and happy is the result of feeling like you are making progress towards achieving your grandest goals and dreams.

“If we did all the things we are capable of, we would literally astound ourselves.”

~ attributed to Thomas Edison

It’s a process of self-discovery and constant refinement. What you love experiencing and doing today, very often evolves over time as you experience the things you want. Ten years from now you may realize you no longer have the same internal enthusiasm for what you love doing and experiencing today, but you’ll find that you are internally compelled to move in a new, more exciting direction.

As a wise person once said, “life is change, growth is optional.” My background is engineering, building construction and construction management. I still love to build and renovate commercial and residential properties, but it is not my primary focus anymore.

When I was in college I had no idea what a life coach was or that they even existed. But here I am over two decades later after graduating college with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Construction Management as a very successful full time life coach.

My hobby of studying personal growth, self-help, business, health, finance, politics, government, war and peace, human behavior, successful people, exercise, sales, management, entrepreneurship, marketing, spirituality, religion, leadership, influence, history,

science, philosophy, coaching, and then applying what I learned, has given me the ability to create multi-million dollar businesses and lifestyles out of nothing but an idea.

Slowly over time, I've started manifesting exactly what I envisioned and imagined in my mind's eye, decade after decade. Because I have done this over and over again as my goals and desires have evolved successfully in my own life, I am able to help people from all over the world, and from every cultural and religious background, to do the same thing in their own lives.

The best way to create the life and lifestyle you really want and deserve, is to study others who are already succeeding at the highest level, model their success, apply the same principles in your own life with your own unique gifts, skills and talents, and slowly over time you will create the same results in your own life. Learning from people who know enables you to speed up your success, avoid their failures and get you from where you are right now, to where you want to be in the quickest, least painful and most efficient way possible.

However, life isn't all sunshine and roses. There will be setbacks, challenges and obstacles to overcome which are unavoidable, but by studying what others do successfully you can minimize them in your own life. You must look at failure as simply part of the process to achieving success. It's a necessary prerequisite and stepping-stone. Failure and setbacks are unavoidable. You need to think in terms of decades instead of months or years when it comes to major goal achievement.

As Tony Robbins so accurately says, "we tend to overestimate what we can accomplish in a year, but underestimate what we can accomplish in a decade." Success comes slowly over time by breaking down big goals into small daily easy-to-achieve goals.

Becoming great at anything is the result of a singular daily focus of trying to get a little better, each and every day. This is a perpetual and permanent commitment to excellence. Living in the present moment and focusing on reasons to be grateful and happy where you are, moment by moment on your journey, as you work on doing what's necessary day in and day out, to become all that you are capable of being.

This means taking relentless action even when you don't feel like it, or when success feels like it's hopeless and impossible. It means committing to a daily routine and choosing to do what is necessary today to move yourself forward, inch by inch, millimeter by millimeter. Achieving your grandest goals and dreams is like moving at a snail's pace and being unable to go any faster, because that is how the universe works and that's just as fast as a snail can travel. You have to put the time in and do the work, day in and day out, no matter what.

It's like getting on a train to your destination. Running around inside the train is not going to do anything to get you there any faster, but only wear you out and frustrate you. So you might as well sit down and enjoy the long journey.

As I sit here typing this, I am sitting under an umbrella by the pool. It's 82 degrees out. The sky is blue with no clouds in sight. I live in a \$10,000,000 condo on the beach. It's a 5 star resort style condominium property with our own private beach, gym, spa and security, with food and drink service from our own exclusive restaurant on property. My neighbors are some of the wealthiest CEO's, entrepreneurs, celebrities, actors, actresses, models, business people and leaders from around the world.

Just a few short years ago I was sleeping on my Dad's couch and thinking to myself, "I need to get off this fucking couch and start living my life again," but I was stuck there and could only keep grinding towards making what is now, my reality.

I have nothing but immense gratitude for my life, business, family and the people in it. I am honored that you have picked up my book and given me the opportunity and chance to be your coach, so you can create the life and lifestyle you've always wanted. If you follow what I teach, you will get results. Since human beings tend to only retain about 8-10% of what they read, hear and see, you should read or listen to the audio version of this book 10-15 times to commit its wisdom, strategies and insight to memory so it becomes instinctual, a natural part of who you are and how you think. Let me explain how I did it, and how I continue to do it.

My World Falls to Pieces

“A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials.”

~ Chinese Proverb

“You should file for bankruptcy.”

I knew that those words were actually coming across the phone line, and that they really were spilling out of the mouth of my business partner, Brian, but I just couldn’t believe what I was hearing. It didn’t feel real at all.

As I put down the phone, I was in a state of shock. It felt like the beams above my head were creaking under some incredible strain, and were about to give way, and the roof was going to fall down on my head.

In that moment, if you had asked me if I was the master of myself, I wouldn’t have been able to reply honestly. It certainly didn’t feel like it.

In the course of that conversation my world, which had seemed so perfect just the day before, started falling to pieces.

Financial disaster was staring me in the face. The reality was just beginning to sink in.

In some ways that was the decisive moment for me. At the time I had far more questions than answers, but it was this experience, more than any other, that put me on a path of discovery and totally transformed my life.

What I learned on that path was the importance of aligning every aspect of my life around my true calling, and that's what I want to share with you throughout the pages of this book.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Let me put that conversation into context so you can understand what it really meant to me. Allow me to take you back in history a bit, and show you how everything started out.

Around 2005 I had a very successful business. Along with two business partners we owned about seven different companies. We had real estate companies, mortgage companies, and one of the partners had a title company. Between all of us, with all the companies and divisions, we were grossing about \$7 million a year. We were each bringing in about a half a million a year in net income.

At the time I was doing a lot of infomercials and paid advertising on TV. It was a hugely successful time for me.

Of course there were a couple of challenges – as with any entrepreneurial undertaking, but basically it was going extremely well.

It was interesting times for the housing market, and an oversupply of cheap loans meant that a lot of people were getting in on the action. Everybody knew somebody who was flipping houses in the real estate market, and a lot of people were over-leveraging themselves.

There were a lot of cheap loans available to people, and there was a lot of money in the real estate market. Of course, the law of supply and demand meant that if there was a huge oversupply of loans chasing a finite amount of properties – there were bound to be problems eventually when those properties artificially appreciated way beyond their real market value.

A lot of my business consisted in helping people to buy a house and/or get a mortgage. Probably around 95% of our clients were first-time homebuyers, who only had between \$2,000 and \$5,000 to put towards a down payment on their house. We were also involved in securing a loan for them, so in many of these deals we were double-ending both sides of the transaction, by earning a real estate sales commission and a mortgage brokerage/origination fee.

We were mostly originating non-conforming 100% financing style loans for our buyers. Unfortunately, many other unscrupulous loan officers and mortgage brokers in the industry were doing what is called NINA loans – which stands for No Income, No Assets. They're also known as liar loans. It was property speculation – and some people would be taking out three or four of these loans in a year.

Some of our competition was only focused on making commissions. Their clients, some of who were only making say \$30k per year, would take out a loan, and have a house built by a builder in a new home community on speculation. They would borrow around \$200,000 to pay the builders sales price, and then sell the homes for \$250,000 or more 8-10 months down the road once the construction was completed.

There was more than enough demand, and the advertising I was doing was bringing in a surplus of buyers – the trouble was – we were struggling to find houses for all of them.

We would be competing against buyers who had sold a house already, and had a much bigger down-payment – 30% or more, to put down. On top of that, because they were more secure, financially, they could outbid us on a house they wanted to buy.

As a result, many of our younger agents selling properties were finding it impossible to compete. It was incredibly frustrating for

them, but more important for me – it was starting to show on the bottom line.

At first I thought it was just a matter of inexperience on their part, but when the numbers continued to decline month after month, I realized that a change was needed.

Failure is a far better teacher than success – and I was more determined than ever to find a new way to succeed.

A lot of my thinking at that time was centered on how to change my advertising strategy to attract a higher class of homebuyer. We needed to sell houses to people who were more financially secure, not to just first-time home buyers with limited financial resources.

Looking down the tracks towards the future, so to speak, I could see a problem coming unless I adapted to the market, and changed the way I did business.

A while before that I had joined the Tony Robbins Platinum Partnership. This was modeled after his Scorpion Club, which he was a part of with some other people – I think Pat Riley the Hall of Fame basketball coach was one of them. It was an exclusive group of high-level people.

To put it in the words of Tony's advertising copy:

“The program is designed for those committed to living life at a level few may ever attain. It is an exceptional, intimate tier of extraordinary people committed to reaching personal and professional achievement.”

At the time, that was what life was all about for me.

The membership cost me about \$65,000, and I got to go on four exclusive trips a year, two of which were attended and run by Tony Robbins and his wife. Each trip cost between \$8,000 and \$12,000.

They take place at exotic five star places all around the world. We went to Costa Rica one time, and stayed on the beach. Another time we went to Malta, and included a trip to the island of Gozo, off the coast of Italy. We did a racecar school in the Carmel Highlands, in California – all around, these were amazing experiences.

It was here, on my first Platinum Partner trip in February 2004 that I got a glimpse of a different side of my own personality. It was something I hadn't expected.

I was watching Tony do a therapeutic intervention on a woman – one of my colleagues on the trip. I don't remember the exact details of the issue she was struggling with, but I clearly remember how amazing it was to watch the whole scene unfold.

This woman's world had obviously just recently crashed down around her. She was totally demoralized and beat down to the ground by what was going on in her life.

Even so, within a matter of about 45 minutes her body language and her entire physiology had changed.

This is something I've talked about in my first book, *How To Be A 3% Man*. Body language is one of the most powerful indicators that people express either success or failure and how they view themselves. This was living proof.

Where before she exuded complete defeat, by the end of it her shoulders were pulled back, her chest was out, her posture was one that expressed self-confidence, her head lifted high, and she was a different person. She was in a totally different state of mind.

She now felt resourceful, optimistic and was looking at the things she could do to change her situation in life. She was thinking about how to fix things, instead of how to give up.

It had a big effect on me. I remember thinking to myself, “I want to learn how to do that!” It was one of the most amazing things I had ever seen in my life.

At the time, though, I didn’t realize just how important that experience was. I didn’t realize exactly what had happened in that moment. My heart was already pulling me in a different direction.

Of course, I couldn’t admit that to myself right then and there. I was still blind to the fact my true purpose and calling had shifted in that moment.

The time wasn’t ripe just yet. I wasn’t completely aligned – body, mind and soul.

Instead my mind was on other things. I had a successful real estate and mortgage company. I had forty employees. My goal was to grow that.

I wanted to create a multi-billion dollar real estate company with offices all over America, and maybe eventually all over the world. This was the story I was telling myself, internally. This was the reality I was creating for myself in my head – and in practice too, as far as I could tell.

More importantly, my whole *Identity* was tied up in that business, not to mention the decade it had taken to get where I was.

My life was like a freight train hurtling down the tracks, and a sudden abrupt change in direction would be impossible – and if it happened, it would be catastrophic.

There was no way I was going to just drop everything and make a 90 degree turn with that kind of velocity and momentum carrying me forward.

Besides, I felt that I was successful – and I was among successful people. I was making good money, and I was dating the coolest chick I'd ever dated in my life. We were happy, and we were in love.

On top of that, most of my money was tied up in assets, with properties, and in the business.

Why would I want to change any of that? How could I?

Nevertheless, the seeds for change had been sown.

We all tend to have this perception about how life's going to be when we've built a great career, or grown a successful business – whatever our purpose is in life, but what often happens is that at some point things change. We no longer have the same internal enthusiasm for what we're doing.

Something like that was already happening with my partners. I loved the business. I loved construction and renovating homes, but I wasn't enjoying the business *relationship* with my partners anymore. I sucked it up, and created mechanisms to get around it, and ways to get the business done without creating confrontation.

"Respond intelligently even to unintelligent treatment."

~ Lao Tzu

But there were confrontations, nonetheless.

A big part of the problem was that I felt as if my partner had sold out in life. He'd given up a music career – the only thing he really loved in life – to please his wife and support his wife and kids. His heart wasn't in the business, but he said the money made up for that, and a lot of what he was doing felt unfair and not congruent with who he really was – it felt like his reaction, was often his way of getting back at life. Because of his violent childhood he was always looking for and expecting a fight. He presupposed somebody was always trying to screw him over somehow, or was out to get him. I was tired of

being on the receiving end of his threats, bullying and temper tantrums.

There was almost constant tension between us. If he wasn't pissed off at me or our other partner, there was always someone he was in conflict with. I felt the only way to get things done was to apologize, and give way to my partner. But this wasn't something I was comfortable doing. We started butting heads more and more. It got to the point where he told me:

“You need to find a way to buy me out.”

After ten years of doing business with my partners, it was time for something to change.

So while I was attending the Tony Robbins Platinum Partnership getaways, the scene was set for a big change. I was thinking of changing partners, but little did I know just how big the change would be.

It was on these trips that I met some of the other Platinum members, Brian and Pedro, and we got to talking. We started developing a friendship. The more we talked, the more it seemed as if our minds and our goals were aligned.

I was interested in Pedro's advertising system, which was supposedly revolutionary. He'd sold it to a couple of other members already.

At the time in 2004 when I started working with Pedro, I wanted to change my business model and bring in more high income high net worth clients – and here was a golden opportunity – at least so I thought.

This group of people was supposed to be the *crème de la crème* of the world's entrepreneurs. They were successful, driven – nothing could stop them. In a word – they were supposed to be awesome. Most of them were, but a few of them were total snakes.

So, after doing some basic due diligence, I made the decision to go into business with Brian and Pedro.

I started the complicated process of cutting ties with my former partners. It wasn't going to be easy, but eventually we negotiated a business separation agreement, part of which involved the sale of our \$2.5 million office building to a group of attorneys.

My portion of the equity for the new company I was forming would come out of the proceeds of the sale. Agreements were drawn up, and the wheels were set in motion. Everything looked set for the next big chapter in my success story.

I took the opportunity for a romantic getaway with my girlfriend to Paris, and I was on top of the world. We were having fun, in love, living life, and looking forward to what was coming. I was finally the master of my life...

Or so I thought.

You've probably guessed what comes next.

I got back into the office on Monday, and the deal with the attorneys had fallen through. They backed out, and the half a million dollars I was counting on was now out of reach.

At the same time I got the news that my new partner Pedro was taking a job with another company, along with his wife.

In all honesty, I should have seen that one coming. Things between Pedro and his wife were complicated after multiple affairs on his part, and their marriage stress was in part due to the influence of my other new partner, Brian, who had his own ideas about open relationships and was encouraging Pedro to explore them himself. It was a recipe for trouble, but I hadn't known about all the subtle details. I later learned that Pedro's wife had been constantly whispering in his ear to influence him to bail on our business

partnership because she felt Brain, was trying to break up their marriage.

On top of that, Pedro's 'revolutionary' sales scheme had been going for almost a year, and it just didn't work.

The cherry on top was when I discovered that Pedro had forged my signature and signed a personal guarantee in my name without my knowledge, on a whole bunch of leased equipment, instead of signing as an officer of our company.

And just like that, he was gone.

But the cascade of disaster didn't stop there. My second new partner, Brian, who had at first reassured me that the new agreements were solid – dropped the final bomb.

The phone rang.

He'd been doing some thinking, and the partnership no longer seemed like such a good idea. In fact, it was probably a bad idea for him to be involved in any way at all. The private equity fund he was running wasn't going to provide the equity we'd agreed on.

Brian knew well enough what my financial standing was. My money was tied up in illiquid assets – properties, mostly, and he knew that my income was barely enough to keep things afloat at the time. Although I was still making money, I also had some serious bills to pay every month since I now had my portion of the mortgage payment for our vacant office building. That didn't seem to make a difference.

“What am I supposed to do now?” Was all I could ask.

“You should probably file for bankruptcy.”

I was ruined.

That's how I started on the road of discovery. It took a total disaster to give me the push I needed to start. As terrible as that moment was – it gave me the impetus to make the changes I really wanted to – and really needed to make.

It often happens in life that a disaster acts as a kind of catalyst. It's like a purifying fire that leads to change, and forces us to either give up, or to evolve. Usually there's a lot of introspection that goes along with it.

That was true for me. I started thinking about my early life, the lessons I had learned, the path I had taken, and how those experiences were shaping me into what I was meant to become.

I'd like to share some of that with you in the following chapters.

Lessons from War - My Early Life

“Mastering others is strength, mastering yourself makes you fearless.”

~ Lao Tzu

At some point in life, quite early on, I started looking inwards for answers. I was searching for spiritual answers. I wanted to know why things are the way they are in the world.

A lot of the motivation for my search came from the way things were when I was growing up.

I came from a family tradition that was basically cold and loveless. I know that not everyone's family is like that, but a lot of kids from my generation could probably relate.

My parents, just like their parents before them, believed that you raised kids a certain way. Basically that meant kicking the crap out of them whenever they stepped out of line. A lot of my family members were mean. They really didn't like each other.

Don't get me wrong – I love my parents, and I don't think they were terrible people. They simply didn't know any better. There were a lot of good things about growing up, and my family wasn't all bad, but if I could pick a theme for my childhood, maybe it would be *lessons from war*.

The War Abroad

I was born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1970, and at the time my father was stationed in Vietnam. It fits the theme, I guess.

His base was near a place called Chu Lai, and today there's still an International airport there. I remember him telling me war stories as I grew up, and of course I thought they were exciting at the time. It was only in later years that I connected the dots, and realized how the experiences had changed him, and shaped him into the way he was.

He described a jeep being towed in that had been in an ambush along a road he used almost every day. Mounted on the jeep was a Browning .50 Caliber Machine Gun, but the whole thing was just riddled with bullet holes. Three soldiers had been killed in a hail of bullets. They didn't even get a single shot off.

The Viet Cong soldiers used to go down the Hồ Chí Minh trail, walking for two weeks in their sandals, with a rocket launcher and a timer on their back. They would place the rocket launcher up in the mountains overlooking the base using bamboo sticks to hold it in place, and set the timer, and then walk back down to repeat the process. They were trying to hit the airport, the aircraft, and the US Air Force base there. My dad's base was located in-between the mountains and the Air Force Base. Sometimes the rockets fell short of the Air Force base and landed on my dad's Army base.

So two or three in the morning, the soldiers would be asleep, and next thing you know a rocket shell would land nearby somewhere. They never knew when it would happen, or when their time would be up. One time a rocket hit the latrine and blew it up.

My dad ran the officer's club, and there were two Vietnamese women who worked there as waitresses. He started noticing a pattern connected to the rocket attacks. When they wouldn't show up for work, he took it as a sign that there was going to be an attack. Still,

no one could really know when the next one would come. But the bottom line is that when these two women did not show up for work, they got hit that night. Death could come at any time, and it's something that works on a man's psyche.

He described watching a group of Huey's (army helicopters) provide air support to a patrol, and seeing one get shot down, nose-diving into the jungle. Just like that, those lives were snuffed out. They were only flying about two hundred yards away from where he was in his foxhole on the base.

He talked about the Sappers – an elite special ops unit of the Vietnamese army who were ruthless fighters. They would crawl stealthily up to the fence, sneak through, and carry out guerilla attacks on the guards. One soldier must have fallen asleep in the guard tower, and next morning he was discovered with his throat slit, and he bled to death. The Sapper must have crawled back out the same way he had come.

My uncle was also in the war. He was in the Marines, and served in Vietnam around 1967 when things were really bad over there. He hasn't touched a gun ever since – even to this day he feels that the whole war was a waste of time. He said to me one time, “I don't know what the hell we accomplished over there.”

The Vietnam War was an event that had a huge impact on the mindset of people in my neighborhood. A lot of my parent's high school friends went over and got killed, maimed, lost a leg, or had their limbs blown off. The war abroad was constantly playing on the minds of people back home. In a way, it helped set the tone in my family life too.

My uncle Richie was one of only 2 guys from his original platoon to complete their combat tour in Vietnam. Everyone else had either been killed or wounded and sent home.

He was an engineer – what’s called EOD or Explosive Ordinance Disposal in the military today. It was an incredibly high-stress occupation, because it meant that he diffused land mines and booby-traps.

A commonly used land mine made a clicking sound when pressure was applied to the top, arming the mine. Once the person steps off the mine, often the type called a “bouncing betty,” it bounces up to knee or waist level height and then it explodes, riddling the trooper’s legs and torso with shrapnel and often blowing off his legs or cutting him in half.

Imagine having your face inches away from a mine trying to find it with a knife, so you can set a C-4 charge to diffuse it by blowing it in place. There is always the chance of an enemy ambush. At any moment the mine could blow up in your face or a fellow Marine steps on another one, or is shot and falls on one. Boom!

His second day in country, one of his friends stepped on a land mine and it blew his legs off. As my uncle’s buddy was laying on the ground bleeding, and in shock, he says, “I can’t believe I came to Vietnam and on the 2nd day I get my legs blown off.”

He once told me an amusing story of what happened to him in boot camp – which goes to illustrate what kind of man he was.

The racial tension, which I will talk more about in the next subsection, was a part of his life too. One day in boot camp he was in the latrine, taking a dump. A huge black soldier came in, and told him to get off the seat, because he needed to take a leak.

My uncle, of course, told him to piss off. The black guy proceeded to unzip his pants, and urinate right between my uncle’s legs, at which point my uncle lost it. He wasn’t a big guy, but he wouldn’t stand for anyone trying to dominate him. He tackled him, beat him up, and threw him through the window. Needless to say, the man never tried picking on him again.

On another occasion my uncle and his unit were taking incoming mortar rounds. Everyone was scrambling to jump into their fox holes and take cover. He was running towards a fox hole when a mortar round went off behind him. It felt like he got hit with a car as he was propelled from the impact to the ground.

He turned around to see what had hit him. His initial thought was maybe he got hit with a tree branch. But it wasn't. The radio operator had been behind him when they were running. He then realized in horror that it was a headless torso, missing the legs and arms, with the radio pack still attached that had hit him.

Just seconds before they had been talking. Now the radio operator was dead and my uncle was covered in what was left of his fellow Marine's body. Can you imagine being covered in the blood, flesh and bone of a friend who only seconds ago was alive and talking to you?

Even in that horror, my uncle found a deep lesson in life, and it's something that made an impact on me.

When your times up, your time's up. So until then, don't worry about it. You're already dead anyway.

After watching his buddies being killed or severely wounded, even though they did everything they were supposed to in order to survive, seemingly at random, my uncle realized that.

For the rest of his combat tour he did all the things he was not supposed to do. He walked on top of the dikes on the rice paddies, even though the Vietcong regularly mined them. Why? Simply because he didn't want to get his feet wet. He realized that if it was his time to go, that there was nothing he could do about it. So he figured he might as well be comfortable.

He was also a "tunnel rat" and went into Vietcong underground tunnels to diffuse booby traps and blow them up. He volunteered to

be a “tunnel rat” so he could get some extra R & R time, and also because he was the smallest guy in his Platoon and could more easily fit into the small Vietcong tunnels.

Something about that story has stuck with me through life. Even though I never lived through the war, I have had several close calls in my life as a child and as an adult where if I would have been an inch off from where I was, I would have been killed or severely injured. Those experiences really made me feel that there was some kind of divine energy protecting me because I still had a purpose to fulfill.

For example, I remember the very last day of eighth grade. I waited to leave because it was common knowledge that the black kids were waiting to beat the shit out of any white kids they found. (I’ll add more about that later).

A lot of the black kids lived in the neighborhood near to the school, and walked home. I had to ride my bike through them to get home.

I remember somebody grabbing me from behind by my hair, and then just letting go. I turned around and the principle was there. This big black kid had grabbed me from behind, about to sucker punch me in the face, but as luck – or divine intervention – would have it, the principle, who as a huge man, just happened to be there to stop it.

Another time I was climbing a tree, probably about two stories up. I noticed that the next branch I was reaching for was rotten and brittle, so I intended to grab it near the base, at the trunk, but I didn’t. Somehow – I don’t know how – as the branch broke, I got caught holding on to both ends of the broken branch with the middle of it being caught and held up by the stump of the broken branch. I ended up dangling in mid-air, and miraculously avoided a serious fall. It felt like some kind of energy was all around me, guiding my hands to just the right place. To this day I don’t know how I survived.

Sometime in middle school I was skateboarding, while being towed by a friend on a bike. We were going pretty fast. It was breakneck

speed. I hit a rock in the road, and should have been seriously hurt. I remember tumbling end over end, my head, knees and elbows tucked in, until I rolled into the grass. Instead of being seriously injured, I didn't even break my skin. Again, it felt like some energy was around me, protecting me from damage.

The same thing happened in traffic one day. Something – A voice or a kind of energy just told me to stop, which I did. At that moment a car hurtled past, and would have killed me if I had taken another step.

These kinds of experiences, along with the stories from my uncle's war days made it clear to me:

Until you have lived and fulfilled your purpose and destiny in life, you cannot be harmed. I sensed early in childhood that some invisible force had kept me totally safe when I should have been toast.

Now that does not mean you should go and jump off a high rise building expecting God to save you, but it does mean that *you should pursue your dreams and goals without fear.*

The bottom line is that God had a plan when he designed you. He had a purpose in mind. What that purpose is, is between you and God. The more you can listen to and follow your heart, the happier and more fulfilled you will be in life.

“There is no imperfection. You've only ever done what you were meant to do.”

~ Panache Desai

The War at Home

The whole time the Vietnam War was going on, while my dad was over there fearing for his life; my pregnant mom was living with my grandmother back in the States.

My grandmother did not like my mom at all. In fact, there was a kind of atmosphere of hostility in the home. This was a war of a different kind, one that had started a few years before.

My grandfather on my mom's side was a war veteran too. He lived through the events of World War II, and saw the atrocities committed in Nazi Germany, but he didn't talk about it much. It was a pretty traumatic experience, and it must have changed him – and it goes a long way towards explaining the way he behaved.

It wasn't until my mother passed away when I was 34 that we found out the whole truth about him, though. My grandfather had another family from a first marriage, with three or four kids that nobody in our family knew about. Sometime after the war he just walked away, and never contacted them again. The worst part about it is that none of the sisters knew a thing about the secret family. They had half-brothers and sisters that they would never know.

I guess he had feelings of guilt, and a lot of issues from what he'd lived through. Whatever his motivation was, his plans were to keep his three other daughters – of which my mom was the middle child – at home forever, living out their days as old maids.

My mom and dad met when they were 17 years old, working in a supermarket. He asked her to Prom and they became high school sweethearts.

When the time came, and my dad proposed, it didn't go down well. The story goes that my grandfather drove to my dad's house to try to

convince him not to marry my mom. He actually begged, and offered to pay my dad to just go away.

My dad told him to go pound sand, and that he was going to marry my mom regardless – he didn't need anyone's approval or permission. They were in love, and that was that.

They must have loved each other then – although I never saw much evidence of love between them as I was growing up

There were never any hugs. My parents never said, "I love you." I never saw them hold hands.

The only time I ever saw them expressing any kind of affection towards each other was during times like Christmas or thanksgiving. My mom would be cooking the turkey, and my dad would say something like "That's really great baby", and give her a little peck on the cheek and put an arm around her. But it was rare.

Other than that it was just a cold relationship.

We were latch-key kids. My parents both worked, so nobody was home when I got back from school. I used to watch a lot of TV, and eat a lot of ice cream and junk food. I had a really terrible diet.

I ate tons of sugar and developed health issues. I developed skin rashes, allergies and I would literally have festering sores on my body that wouldn't go away.

My mom didn't want to take us to the doctor. Her way of dealing with the problem was to prescribe calamine lotion, and threaten us:

"You're going to turn out just like your aunt Maryanne." Aunt Maryanne was the black sheep of the family apparently, the sister who never got married.

She had a strange way of trying to motivate us. It was a negative form of motivation; based on fear, not love.

These were blows to my self-esteem, so I tended to withdraw into myself from time to time.

When other family members would come over during holidays there were no hugs. We didn't tell each other that we loved one another. There were plenty of gifts.

The 'love language' that our family used was giving gifts, to use a phrase from *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman.

That resentment they had towards one another always played out – especially during the holidays.

My grandfather served in the US Navy during World War II, and was involved in five different invasions. He was in the merchant marines after World War II, and so he was away from home a lot. He used to cheat on my grandmother – we know about it from letters he used to write to my uncle, where he used to boast. My aunt got hold of these letters, and used to tell my mom all about it. I don't think my grandmother knew all of it, and if she did, she kept it to herself. This kind of thing obviously happened a lot – there were plenty of hookers too. Who knows what he was doing half way across the world.

He suffered from depression and drank his whole life.

My dad drank a lot too. Ever since I was a kid there were at least a six pack of beers when I was growing up, and a couple of glasses of wine as he got older every night.

There were times when my dad would be drinking, and I would get the worst of it. My brother was an expert at instigating trouble to get attention, and I was the one who got my ass kicked, several times a week.

My dad used to say:

“You know when I was your age, my father used to bounce me off the walls, and I swore I would never do that my own kids.”

I was thinking – what the fuck do you think you’re doing to me right now?

That was my childhood. I was asking myself a lot of questions.

I remember the first time I heard the words “I love you” spoken out loud in a spontaneous way. It happened when I was eighteen years old, picking up one of my best friends for a night out. As we left the house he called back to his parents.

“Bye mom, bye dad – *I love you.*”

To which they responded: “We love you.”

I remember I was teasing him about it. I’d never known anything like that. It certainly didn’t happen in my family.

My mom and dad would never say anything like that. They would never say, “I’m proud of you.” We either got ignored, or we got the crap beaten out of us when we weren’t doing what they wanted us to do.

As a little kid, growing up in an environment like that, where there’s no affection, your natural instinct is to feel that something is wrong with you. You start to think that if you’re not loved, you’re not worthy of love. You’re not lovable, and you start looking for answers.

People who grow up in abusive situations – whether it’s physical, mental or emotional abuse – will often become spiritual in one way or another as a result. They look inwards for answers to the questions they feel they need answers to. They start spending time in nature, and wondering why the world is the way it is.

I had this fort in the back garden that my dad and grandfather built when we were in elementary school. There was a turtle pond built out of concrete with a long streambed my grandfather helped me build for my turtles. It had a pump and a little waterfall.

I used to go there after school and sit for hours, listening to the wind blow through the fence. I would listen to the breeze in the trees, and watch the turtles, and the goldfish – if the local cats hadn't snatched the goldfish.

I used to feel like an alien from another planet. I had a hard time relating to others my age. I felt different.

I was contemplating the big questions in my life:

Why is my dad kicking my ass? Why do my parents not love me? Why don't they care about me? Why is life so hard? Why are my grandparents so mean? Why does everyone in my family seem to dislike each other so much?

Everything had seemed pretty good in our family in the early days – from when I was really young. There were times when we truly seemed happy. We moved around a bit. My mom moved from Florida and lived on a military base in Warner Robbins Georgia while my dad finished his tour of duty in Vietnam.

My aunt showed me letters that my mom had written back then, and she seemed really happy being married to my dad and being a mom.

We lived in Illinois for a while. We were way out in the boonies by the cornfields, and it was cold. Sometimes we couldn't attend school because of the weather.

My parents said they paid \$5,000 for a three bedroom, two bathroom house there – it sounds hard to believe, given what we pay for a house today. We lived there for five years, and they eventually sold the house for \$25,000. It's interesting from the point of view of my real estate business, but that's not why I mention this part of my life.

Besides the terrible weather, it was also a testing time for my mom, and it offers some insight into her state of mind, as well as the atmosphere in the home.

First her father died in 1976 from a massive heart attack, and then she had to watch her mom slowly pass away from cancer.

My grandmother knew her time was limited, and so she had an outfit made that she was to be buried in. By the end her leg was so riddled with cancer that it had become enormous. My brother and I weren't allowed to go see her anymore.

My mother and her two sisters used to care for her, and watched her slowly pass away. She would have to bandage up the leg all the time, because every time it moved, the skin would rupture. It must have weighed heavily on my mom. The last few months my grandmother didn't even recognize her own three daughters or know who they were.

In later years I also learned that my great grandmother suffered from mental illness, and got locked up in asylum for the latter part of her life. They say it skips a generation. In a later part of the book I'll talk more on this subject, but there were influences on my family from that side too.

By the time I got to sixth grade, my folks bought a coin laundry business. The people they bought the business from were dirt bags, and swindled my parents. They had to work hard to make the business stay afloat, and they probably didn't think of it as a success in the beginning – but for me it was a positive experience. My dad stayed working in retail until the business grew enough to where he could leave and work with my mom full time. They eventually built it into a very successful and lucrative business. They had the self-serve coin laundry business, wash-dry-fold, dry cleaning, draperies and large hotel and restaurant accounts.

When I wasn't at school I worked at the laundry doing wash-dry-fold, customer service, folding towels and sheets, and interacting with customers. It instilled a good work ethic in me. I liked working, and making money, and it helped me come out of my shell and get

some experience in dealing with people. I started developing the people skills that would be of such great value later in life. My brother was lazy and would talk about how hard he was going to work and how much money he was going to make, but most times, shortly after we arrived at night, he just crawled underneath the folding tables and went to sleep next to our dog.

Slowly but surely I was starting to fit the pieces together. I was learning the things that would eventually shape my own path, and my own destiny.

I could see the patterns of behavior that was keeping my family trapped.

It's not like my parents were horrible people. They just didn't know any better. They grew up in dysfunctional families, where everybody was cold and emotionless. It seemed to be a tradition that came down from the time of my great grandparents – who knows, maybe even further back.

My grandparents moved away from New York to get away from their parents, and my own parents did the same thing. It was a perpetual cycle. It was generation after generation of loveless relationships. There was really no change.

Meanwhile we were living in an atmosphere of tension and hostility. The Vietnam War came and went, but social events closer to home were starting to come to the boiling point. Racial hatred was at an all-time high, and the middle school I attended was a battlefield. Black kids and white kids were in a kind of war – except instead of rifles and shells, it was fists, rocks and bottles.

The War at School

During the time I attended middle school, in the eighties, there was a lot of racial tension between black and white people. A shooting in Liberty City hit the news headlines, and added fuel to the fire in an already volatile situation. A black man on a motorcycle was running from the cops, and a policeman pulled out a gun and shot him down. It got on the TV news and soon there were huge riots in Miami. 18 people died, 350 people were injured, 600 were arrested and there was over \$100 million dollars in damage.

There was so much seething hatred on both sides of the color divide. I could understand why, especially after listening to the stories my mom told me about when she and my dad grew up.

My mother grew up in Tampa, Florida. I remember her telling me about how she was getting on the bus, when she was only ten or eleven years old. An old black lady who was already sitting towards the back of the bus had to get up to make room for her. That's just the way it was back then. My mom told me how bad she felt for the old lady. It was such an injustice.

It wasn't until the Civil rights activist Rosa Parks came along and said 'Fuck You, I'm not moving,' that all of that changed. She became famous when she refused to surrender her bus seat to a white passenger, spurring the Montgomery boycott and other efforts to end segregation.

That may have changed the laws, but the hatred was still deeply ingrained where I went to school.

As a kid at school you didn't walk down the hallway by yourself, you didn't go into the bathroom by yourself. There were gangs of kids waiting to jump you and take your lunch money, or whatever they could get from you.

I remember walking to one of my classes in seventh grade. As I turned the corner I saw that a white kid was being taunted by a big group of black kids – maybe a hundred of them, both girls and boys. There was nothing I could do. I felt helpless.

On the one hand I could understand why they wanted to beat white kids up, but that didn't make it any easier.

When I rode my bike home I had to keep looking behind me. I constantly had to dodge the rocks and the bottles that were being thrown at me. Without exception, if I wasn't paying attention, a big rock would hit, or a bottle would explode, shards of glass flying everywhere. It wasn't an exception, it was the rule.

I might not have been a soldier in Vietnam, but I was scared for my life most days riding home, and I hated feeling that way. I liked riding my bike, especially when some of my friends were with me. I liked the independence of it. Besides, taking the bus took an hour longer. It was only when things got really bad that I opted for the bus.

I was getting beaten up at home by my dad on a weekly basis, and the last thing I wanted was for the same thing to happen at school.

I didn't really have a choice, except to try not to piss anybody off. I was a late bloomer. I wasn't the biggest kid in school. I was really short, and a scrawny kid, and I wasn't going to be able to defend myself very well. My voice didn't even change till my sophomore year in high school.

That meant I had to learn to adapt, so I became friends with some of the biggest, toughest black kids in school. If we were sitting in a class, and they needed help in a test – I had no problem helping them out.

They grew to like me, and looked out for me. They called me “Little Man.” They would bust your balls and cut you down to see what you were made of. I would smile, and laugh it off. I used self-deprecating

humor to not take myself seriously. I was used to people bigger than me kicking my ass.

“Do not take life too seriously – you will never get out of it alive.”

~ Elbert Hubbard

I wasn't the only one to suffer from these attacks. My brother attended the same school, and he had his fair share of trouble. My father told me in later years about something that had happened that I didn't even realize at the time.

My brother was in sixth grade in Pompano Middle School, and at one point he became very quiet. Day after day he came home looking downcast and unhappy. Like me he was a late bloomer – really skinny and scrawny.

There was a really big black girl in school with him, about three times his weight, and mean as a junkyard dog. She wasn't too bright, and had gotten held back a few times. She had got it into her head to bully my brother.

People tend to project what's inside them. Nobody does or says anything to you that isn't a reflection of something that's already inside them. A self-loathing person is always going to look for someone to project that hatred and negativity onto. If you're in the way, and you allow that to happen – you're going to get the worst of it.

That's what this girl was doing. More than likely her situation at home wasn't ideal, and she probably lacked the right kinds of mentors in her life. My brother was unsure of himself – and she was picking on him. She waited for him outside of class to beat him up and smack him around everyday.

My mother then went to see the school principle. She sat down and told him that it was unacceptable for her son to be in fear for his life

every day at school. The principle tried to downplay it all – but she wouldn't give up.

I love and respect my mother for what she did. She worked for the school board, and had a lot of friends there, so she threatened the Principle. She told him who she knew, and who she worked for, and who her friends were – and told him that if he didn't do what he was supposed to do, it wouldn't go well for him in his job. He might not be Principle for much longer.

The girl was suspended, and she never bothered my brother again.

It could have made me hate anyone who was black, but instead I felt a sense of compassion. I wanted to avoid violence at all costs. At home I was constantly walking on eggshells – and I knew that many of these kids were even worse off than me. Even then, there was something at work in my spiritual nature.

Perhaps some of it had to do with one aspect of my mother's spiritual outlook on life. She had some views that were a little different to the other people in the neighborhood, and maybe even a little controversial. She used to tell me about Edgar Cayce, a Christian mystic with the gifts of prophecy and second-sight. He used to do readings on people, and give them advice that would lead to physical and spiritual healing. He was nick-named, "the sleeping prophet." I highly recommend the book, "There is a River, The Story of Edgar Cayce" by Thomas Sugrue. It will blow your fucking mind. It's definitely worth your time.

Out of the fires of hatred and hostility, my own views were starting to be forged. One of the insights that rose out of this background was this:

Everyone that you meet is fighting a hard battle that you're probably not even aware of. So be kind and compassionate. If you could walk in their shoes and look through their eyes you could know why they think the way they do, and why they do what they do.

As I got older, these vague insights started to crystalize into a deeper and fuller understanding about the relationships between people, and how the race divide works. I now realize that no one will ever do or say anything to you that is not a direct reflection of how they feel about themselves at any given moment. Racism is just another expression of this.

Everything human beings do can be broken down into two primary outcomes:

- 1) Trying to get love, or
- 2) Trying to give love.

Many times, unhappy people – no matter what their skin color – try to meet those primary goals in very dysfunctional, violent and sometimes cruel ways. I came to understand that people are constantly projecting their own self-hatred and self-loathing onto you. It's the only way they know how to feel good about themselves – but of course it doesn't work, at least not in the long run. They get a temporary kick out of it, and feel more powerful for a while, but the underlying fear doesn't go away. They've become addicted to meeting their needs in a very dysfunctional way.

This same dysfunction plays out all across the world in the lives of ordinary people everywhere, all the time, and it has seeped into the fabric of our society and culture. You can see it at work in every revolution and uprising, in every coup and every dictatorship. It's in every political system.

The roots of the problem lie in the basic error in our understanding of the nature of the universe, and our place in it. It comes down to our egos – what or who we believe we are. We believe we're part of a 'minority' – and get a sense of identity from that. We believe we're part of the oppressed class. We mistakenly believe we're small and worthless, and hand over the power to some unknown leader, 'the oppressor.'

We ignore the wisdom in our hearts and listen to our intellects instead. The basic spiritual teachings from many different cultures – black, white, Indian, or oriental, point to the heart as the source of true knowledge, and show that the way to transcend human problems comes through the heart.

When you look at our world, you can see there is a lot of chaos, war, genocide, exploitation, disease, dishonesty, corruption and a general lack of heart-centered leaders.

The Hopi and Maya (yes, they're still around; there are 440 tribes of the Maya still alive and well today) along with thousands of indigenous tribes around the world all have sacred knowledge they have kept to themselves for the past 13,000 years. Their most sacred knowledge says regarding this time, that humanity is moving from being in their heads and their minds back to being in and living from their hearts.

The intellect or mind sees separation and needs to classify and label everything it sees and hears in this world. This mind, or to call it what it truly is - the ego - is the part of us that says... "I am what I do", "I am what I have", "I am my reputation", "I am my relationship", "this should be there", "that should not be there", "I like this" "I don't want that to be there" – it's an endless stream of self-speak. Basically what it says is: "I am separate. I am individual. I am no part of the whole."

It sees *separation and division, and therefore that's what we believe reality is like – that's the reality we create*. The heart would never create anything that is harmful to another or impinges upon the divine free will of another, because the heart knows, all life is one. As Max Planck, the originator of Quantum theory and Nobel Prize winner in Theoretical Physics discovered, the oneness of all life is a physical fact:

"As a man who has devoted his whole life to the most clear headed

science to the study of matter, I can tell you as a result of my research about the atoms this much. There is no matter as such. Matter doesn't exist the way that we think it does. What we see as matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force and we must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter. This mind is what underlies the intelligence that we see as the world around us."

Quantum theory Nobel prize-Max Planck 1918

We (our minds and intellects, that is) have taken on unenlightened perspectives that have caused us to see only the separation between God, nature and each other. We no longer feel the connection. The mind seeks to rationalize away all kinds of cruel and unspeakable things in order to determine who is a "have" and who is a "have not". Who is the winner and who the loser is. This leads to the mentality of competition - Survival of the fittest. "Nothing personal, it's just business" – it's this kind of thinking. It's polarity consciousness which sees everything through the lens of, "us vs. them."

Many of our heartless world leaders negotiate behind closed doors, and may pretend to like each other in public, while in private they loathe, backbite and scheme to fuck each other over as they fight over the worlds "scarce" resources.

The results of their corrupt practices and deals are that they unfairly enrich the well-connected, while the third world is allowed to starve. Genocides are allowed to happen and general lawlessness and despair run rampant in countless poor and struggling third-world countries. Hey, it's nothing personal, it's just business. It's all mind. The heart is not involved. If the heart had been involved it would have been a win-win deal for all and the suffering of the third world would not be allowed.

As the Hopi, Maya and thousands of other indigenous tribes around the world state, humanity is entering a new, more enlightened era. It's the coming of an era where humanity works together collectively

in a heart centered approach for the benefit of each other and our planet. Everywhere you look, the old corrupt oppressive financial system and governments controlled by the few is starting to collapse. As Lord Acton said, *liberty exists in the distribution of power, tyranny in the concentration of it*. Everything that no longer serves humanity is beginning to dissolve.

This is what I've come to discover in later years, and I only wish I had understood it better at the time. Perhaps it wouldn't have been so hard to endure. But in another way I'm grateful for the experience. All that racial hatred taught me something very valuable in life.

Pain and suffering can become your teachers, if only you allow them to work on you, and transform your mind and your heart.

There's one more episode I want to share from this period of my history. Looking back at it now, it might not seem like a big deal, at least not on the surface. But it was a kind of a turning point for me. It was a moment when all the pressures from home, all the knocks to my self-esteem, and all the constant tension in my life finally came to a head.

There was an older kid in the neighborhood. His name was David, who used to walk around with a pet parrot, and he was just a dick. He'd been held back a few times because he was dumber than a bag of hammers. He was really tall and had long arms. As we got older, he just started picking on me. I guess he saw some kind of weakness in me.

"You might as well start crying now, 'cause I'm gonna kick your ass." He used to say to me.

I'd saved up money from my paper route and bought this skateboard that I really loved. David was mad at me because I scored a touchdown against him. He was a big kid, but he wasn't great at sports, and didn't have good coordination.

So he grabbed my new skateboard, and he saw his chance for revenge. He took the skateboard and threw it high in the air so it landed on the road, over and over again until it was pretty fucked up.

At that point something happened inside me. This was the tipping point. I wasn't going to stand for being bullied any longer. It was blind fury and rage; all the pent-up emotions just poured out of me, erupting like a geyser. I just lost it, went crazy, and started swinging at him. I wouldn't say I kicked his ass, or that he kicked mine – we both got a couple of good licks in, I got my bell rung and it wasn't pleasant for either one of us.

The point is – he never picked on me again.

That was an important event for me – it was me standing up for myself. It's something that stuck with me right into my adult life. I realized the importance of standing up for yourself, and fighting for what you believe in – for the things that matter. Otherwise, there's always going to be someone like David who is going to come along and try to take it away from you.

Even at this young age I was getting spiritual insight into why things were the way they were, and this provided the raw material for what was to grow into my authentic life path.

The lessons I was learning from the wars around me – the one in Vietnam, the one at home, and the one at school, were going to be the lessons that stuck with me for life.

Every Life Matters

Racial tension is still, even after so many years, a burning issue in our society. It has led to so much pain, violence and hatred, and the underlying animosity is constantly on the verge of boiling over.

I would like to step out of the flow of my personal story for a moment to address this question a little more deeply. The aim of this book, after all, is to learn how to master ourselves, and bring people together. For that to happen, we need to walk in the shoes of another, and to really feel what the people that are involved in it are feeling. Obviously there is a problem in our society, and I think there's a pretty simple solution.

It is only by confronting the truth squarely and fearlessly that we as a nation and as a global society can move beyond the hatred into a place of acceptance and peace. So let's look at the status quo, and some of the incidents that have fueled the fires of racial tension, and also consider the solution.

If we are honest, we would have to admit that a significant portion of the African American community in the USA have the perception that police are summarily executing people because they're black. That's the perception; although it doesn't necessarily mean it fits with the reality every time.

If we look at things objectively, we have to admit that, yes - there are bad cops, there are racist cops, there are white cops that don't like black people and there are black cops that don't like white people. You have cops that are just not cut out for the force, that shouldn't be in law enforcement. You have cops that have been on the line too long, they're too stressed and sometimes they lose their shit, and when they lose their shit, they get people killed.

These are the facts, and we see the results every time the news covers an incident of racial brutality – and people then tend to become even further divided on the issue, instead of pinpointing the source of the trouble, and working for a solution.

But then, thankfully, there are also rare moments of clarity and hope, which point the way out of this mess.

One such moment happened, surprisingly enough, during a Trump rally, called the 'Mother of All Rallies,' held in Washington D.C. in September 2017.

What was so surprising was that the organizers decided to invite Hank Newsome, the president of *Black Lives Matter* New York, to address the pro-Trump crowd. Everyone was tense, expecting more of the same racial clashes we've become so used to. As it turned out, quite the opposite happened.

While Newsome made his way to the makeshift stage near the Washington Monument, the event's organizer, Tommy Hodges, had to persuade some in the crowd to hear them out. When he got up on stage and started speaking, something incredible happened. He started out:

"I am an American. And the beauty of America is that when you see something broke in your country, you can mobilize to fix it.

So you ask why there's a Black Lives Matter. Because you can watch a black man die and be choked to death on television and nothing happens. We need to address that."

What he was referring to was likely the incident that occurred in Staten Island in July 2014. A 43 year-old black man, Eric Garner, was filmed being arrested by a group of NYPD officers on suspicion of selling "loosies" (single cigarettes) from packs without tax stamps.

Garner was a big man – weighing around 400 pounds, and the video footage shows four or five cops struggling to subdue him, and one of them puts him in a chokehold, while you can hear Garner repeatedly saying “I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe!” Tragically Garner died soon after that, and days later the public was outraged when the police officer seemed to be getting off without punishment.

If you watch the video it doesn’t look like the cop was purposely trying to murder him. Nevertheless, it is horrible that it happened – and nobody wins. Garner’s family lost their breadwinner, the cop (and his family) loses, the city loses, and we as a people also lose. So, that’s what Newsome is referring to, the man being choked to death on television and nothing happens.

If you have a bad cop, at the end of the day that cop is going to come under the spotlight over and over again because people in the community who are interacting with this corrupt police officer are going to say: “This guy broke my nose” or “he knocked my teeth out” and everybody that gets arrested by this guy comes back with missing teeth or a broken nose or ends up in a hospital, whatever it happens to be.

The bottom line is that bad cops do things, and it gets pointed out. When I look at this, if we’ve got bad cops that aren’t getting fired, it tells me, by logical conclusion, that we have incompetent politicians running things and we have people in the community that aren’t as involved as they could or should be.

Every police department has what’s called “IA”, which stands for Internal Affairs. In theory, their goal is to root out corrupt people in law enforcement, or the “bad cops” if you will.

If we’ve got a police department that has a perpetually shitty relationship with the community, and the perception amongst people is that there are a lot of bad cops, it tells me that the community’s leaders are not interacting with the city leaders, the people that

actually run the government, aren't doing anything about it. Therefore, if you've got a bad cop, maybe you've got people in Internal Affairs that aren't really doing their job as they should be doing. The way our system is structured is that you've got the mayor; you've got the city manager, and different people that you can go to. Newsome made the same argument.

At that point in the speech, the agitated crowd began to interrupt Newsome with jeers and boos, but he continued bravely:

"We are not anti-cop! We are anti-bad cop. We say if a cop is bad, he needs to get fired like a bad plumber, a bad lawyer, like a bad fucking politician!"

We don't want handouts, we don't want anything that is yours. We want our God-given right to freedom, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Then someone in the crowd yelled out: "All lives matter!" To which Newsome replied straight from the heart:

"You are so right, my brother, you are so right. All lives matter, right? But when a black life is lost, we get no justice. That is why we say black lives matter. If we really want America great, we do it together."

(Hains, 2017)

The Black Lives Matter message was all about saying, "Hey, black lives matter. We feel like black lives are being treated like they don't matter and they're irrelevant in society, especially by the police." And so obviously you have white people saying, "Well, all lives matter. All American lives matter, not just black people."

What's important about this is that the Black Lives Matter people are not saying that white lives *don't* matter and other lives don't matter, they're simply trying to say there's a problem in the black

community here that people are, in their opinion or perception, getting murdered and killed by cops and nobody is doing anything about it. So obviously the movement hasn't gone away. On many levels they don't feel like their needs are being met.

What I felt was beautiful about this guy Hank Newsome is that he got up and he gave a really great speech and he spoke from his heart. And he said a lot of things that pretty much everybody there agreed upon. He talked about some common ground – and that's what we need. We need to get people looking at how we can work together, as opposed to everything being Left versus Right – which is just polarity consciousness.

Newsome's speech was picked up by the media all over the country and everybody, I think, universally agreed that they thought it was a beautiful moment. These Conservative Republicans brought the Black Lives Matter people up on stage because their whole gist is that everybody has the right of free speech and to speak their minds. They wanted to give these Black Lives Matter representatives the ability to go up there.

After the speech, Newsome said in an interview with the *Washington Post*:

“It kind of restored my faith in some of those people because when I spoke truths, they agreed. I feel like we made progress. I feel like two sides who never listened to each other actually made progress today.”

(Soong, 2017)

I love that. They were actually listening to each other, which is a very positive thing. In other words they were trying to walk in the other person's shoes and look through their eyes and feel what they feel.

Newsome continued:

“Did I expect to go on that stage? No. I expected to come down here with my fists in the air, in a very militant way, exchange some insults, maybe some dirty looks or who knows what. If not on a grander level, but just person to person I think we really made some substantial steps without either side yielding anything. I hope they understand that one of the leaders of Black Lives Matter movement is a proud American and Christian who cares deeply about the country and the people in it, whether they are documented or not. I want them to understand that we are educated, that we apply a strategy, but we come from a place of love. We really are here to help this country move towards a better place, not to destroy it.”

That speech was like a ray of light, when we look at some of the dark things that we constantly see on the news. Every time there is an episode of violence, it’s as if we take another step backwards.

Take for example the events that led to the death of Philando Castile.

On July 6, 2016, Philando Castile was shot and killed by Jeronimo Yanez, a St. Anthony, Minnesota, police officer. He had been pulled over in Falcon Heights, a suburb of Saint Paul. Castile was in the passenger seat of a car with his girlfriend, Diamond Reynolds, and her four-year-old daughter when he was pulled over by Yanez and another officer.

Castile owned a firearm, and had a legal permit to carry a concealed weapon – but unfortunately he wasn’t carrying it with him, as he was required to do by US law. When Yanez approached, with his hand on his firearm, as is the custom with this kind of thing, Castile told the cop he was carrying a weapon, and the cop twice replied – “Well don’t reach for it then.”

The cop was probably thinking, “He just told me he had a gun, maybe he’s going for his gun.” When Castile reached down – presumably to get his ID – the police officer shot him seven times,

and killed him, while his girlfriend was filming it. If you watch the video that made it onto YouTube you can hear the cop, after he shot him with his gun drawn, say, “Why did he do it? I told him not to reach for it.”

It’s a horrible tragedy. You had a jumpy cop who was scared, who was fearful, and he overreacted. He killed the guy. I don’t look at it and say, “Philando Castile was murdered because he was black.”

But a lot of people think that way. Yanez was acquitted of all charges on June 16, 2017 – and again there was a massive outcry for justice.

You get people who don’t know any better who say, “Oh, the cop should have pulled a Taser.”

Well, there was a very famous case that just happened recently here where a cop pulled a Taser and the suspect had his hand in his pocket on his gun. The suspect just pulled the gun out of his pocket and shot the cop, and it was no contest. You see in the video it happened so fast, there’s just no time to react. If you don’t act quickly, you’re dead.

President Obama always took the position of the protestors and the attitude that the police were summarily executing black people just because they’re black. And so, the perception was put out there because he, as the leader of the United States, said things like that.

The media carried that same kind of narrative. So, with the riots and the protests, and everything that’s happened, the unfortunate reality is statistically, African American black men commit a higher percentage of crimes. So, it’s understandable that any police officer, black, white, Asian, doesn’t matter – is going to be a little more cautious when approaching a black man.

If you watch these cops and what they put up with, things can go bad in an instant, and you can understand why the potential is there to

overreact and get someone killed - just like what happened with Philando Castile.

Then, of course, the media gets hold of this kind of story, and they play it up and they don't always have all the facts right, because they're pushing an emotional narrative for click porn, to get people to click and tune into their broadcasts, which is a disgrace because they're not really informing the people. They're misinforming the people, which makes it even worse.

The well-known case of the shooting of Michael Brown is a prime example – where the wrong facts touted by the media sparked unrest in Ferguson. Believing accounts that Brown had his hands up in surrender when he was shot, protesters chanted, "Hands up, don't shoot." Protests, both peaceful and violent, along with vandalism and looting, continued for more than a week in Ferguson until police established a nightly curfew.

The shooting of Michael Brown occurred on August 9, 2014. At the time he was 18 years old.

For whatever reason, he didn't want to pay for cigars at a convenience store. On the video footage you can see the little guy who owned the store come out, and he tries to get Brown to either pay or to leave the cigars behind. For whatever reason, Michael Brown thought it was okay that he was just going to take these. He was a big kid, over 6 foot tall, and you've got this little short Vietnamese guy who's probably barely even 5 foot tall just getting smacked around and pushed aside by Michael Brown as he goes out the door.

And then of course the owner of the store calls the police, and the police show up. What you hear in the news is that the white cop summarily executed Michael Brown.

The media got the facts wrong. Michael Brown was supposedly told to put his hands up, and he surrendered to the cop, and yet the cop

still shot him and murdered him. Some members in the neighborhood said that Michael Brown had his hands up and he was murdered. The fact is that they were lying, which all came out during the court case. You also had witnesses that lived in Michael Brown's neighborhood that saw the whole thing that said Michael attacked the cop. He just walked up to the cop's car and started pummeling the cop. The cop pulled his weapon and first Michael left and then he turned around and he charged back at the cop. Maybe he was high, we don't really know.

The bottom line is what actually happened and what came out in the trial was that you had a couple of witnesses who obviously were lying because they hated police officers, and they said that he was just summarily executed.

But you had many more witnesses who told a different story. I mean the cop had a black eye, and bloody nose. The bottom line is what got perpetuated in the media was, "Hands up!" "Don't shoot!" And that never actually happened.

By the time the truth finally came out, months later after the trial, the real story was that Michael Brown robbed the store, and stole the cigars because he wanted to roll some blunts. He assaulted the owner of the store. He then attacked the cop, who defended himself, and killed the kid.

Again, everybody loses, the cop loses, Michael Brown loses, Michael Brown's family loses, and society loses. It's a terrible tragedy.

The worst of it was that the media got it horribly wrong, and even worse, they never followed up to set matters straight. As a result we saw the riots and further violence. Innocent people's businesses got burned down, and there was millions of dollars' worth of property damage.

Another incident that fueled the fires of racial tension was the death of Freddie Gray in 2015.

Police on bicycles encountered Freddie Gray on the morning of April 12, in the street near Baltimore's Gilmor Homes housing project, an area known to have high levels of home foreclosures, poverty, drug deals and violent crime.

Grey had a long track record of drug dealing and had drug problems. The police force in the area knew the guy because he was a habitual criminal. So the cops arrested him when he ran, and put him in the back of a police van, but didn't secure him.

By the time he got to the police station, he was unresponsive in the back of the van. They ended up taking him to the hospital and he died from a broken neck.

The one mistake the police made was they didn't secure him properly in the van. It was a very famous case because most people were saying that the only way Grey got a broken neck was because the police obviously beat the crap out of him. But on the video footage you see him getting loaded in the van, and nobody's beating the crap out of anybody.

Between the time Grey was loaded into the van, and when the van got to the station, he somehow ended up with a broken neck.

Again there was a huge outcry of protest.

What's interesting about this story is that all the police officers have since been acquitted, and once again the media convinced everybody that Freddie Grey's neck was broken by the police officers. The facts are that all the police officers got off because there was another inmate in the van that testified that the whole time Freddie Grey was banging his head against the wall of the van. And he had an injury in his neck that was consistent with a bolt that was in the back of the van.

We can never know what really happened, but we have to consider all of the evidence. I saw an episode of "Cops" in the 80's where a

detainee beat his head against the back seat window of a police cruiser because he was drunk or on drugs. Grey had injuries that matched the bolt in the back of the police van. A fellow detainee testified he was banging his own head against truck. He wasn't restrained properly either.

More than likely Freddie Grey was on drugs or he had been on drugs and he started whacking his head against the side of the van because he was pissed off that he was getting arrested again, and he obviously didn't want to go to jail. The second prisoner testified that Grey was banging his own head against the wall and there was nobody there to stop him or do anything about it because, obviously, the driver's in the front of the van and it's separated from the passenger compartment where the inmates are.

So that put reasonable doubt in the jurors' minds. You could, at worst, say the cops were negligent because they didn't strap him in properly and therefore he got injured when the car stopped.

The guy died, but again it turned out that what the media initially reported was just not accurate.

Sometimes, though, the evidence is overwhelming – and it's clear that the shooting is unpardonable.

That was the case with the shooting of Walter Scott, which occurred on April 4, 2015, in North Charleston, South Carolina. In this case, the entire episode was captured on camera.

Following a daytime traffic stop for a non-functioning brake light, Scott, an unarmed black man, was fatally shot by Michael Slager, a white North Charleston police officer.

Scott was a forklift operator, who was studying massage therapy. He had previously served two years in the U.S. Coast Guard before being given a general discharge in 1986 for a drug-related incident. Besides that he was constantly in trouble over child support

payments. Each time he got arrested for not paying what was due, he would lose his job, and then have an additional criminal record – and the cycle would repeat itself. This time he decided to run from the police, and as luck would have it, this cop was on the point of snapping. Walter just happened to be the straw that broke the camel's back.

On the video footage you can see the cop had his gun drawn, and tells him to stop, Walter starts running away and the cop shoots him in the back and kills him. Then you see the officer on the radio, "He went for my gun. I had to shoot him." – Which was obviously a blatant lie.

In a May 2017 plea agreement, Slager pled guilty to federal charges of civil rights violations. In return for his guilty plea, murder charges from the state were dropped. The guilty plea carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

In this particular case, we must all agree that Michael Slager, a white cop, murdered a black man. You could say he was racist; you could say he snapped. The bottom line is that he was a bad cop and he killed a man wrongfully. Walter Scott lost his life. It's a tragedy.

Just a few days before the completion of this book, *CNN* reported the court's decision on Slager's prison sentence.

"US District Court Judge David Norton made his decision after hearing emotional statements from members of both families. Norton earlier had said the "appropriate underlying offense" for Slager, who is white, was second-degree murder."

Slager will serve 20 years in prison, instead of the life sentence that the prosecutor was asking for.

Scott's family has repeatedly expressed forgiveness to Slager, who said that he was thankful for that. But the victim's relatives were glad to see the officer held accountable.

"We are hurt," said Anthony Scott, Walter's brother," and we do have some type of passion for the Slager family, in that they have to suffer as well. And we do forgive Michael Slager for what he did. But yes, we did want justice for my brother, and we feel that we have gotten a sense of justice."

Attorney General Jeff Sessions made an important comment afterwards:

"Officers who violate anyone's rights also violate their oaths of honor, and they tarnish the names of the vast majority of officers, who do incredible work," he said. "Those who enforce our laws must also bide by them -- and this Department of Justice will hold accountable anyone who violates the civil rights of our fellow Americans."

(Andone, 2017)

Everyone has their own opinion about this issue. We need to try to understand everybody, and where they come from, what they're thinking, what they're feeling, and walk in their shoes. It's not easy.

We need to consider the matter from the point of view of the victims, and also from the point of view of the Police officers.

By watching videos of police officers being murdered in the line of duty, and not just black victims, we can see that it happens in an instant.

It's just not realistic to expect a cop to pull out a Taser when the person that they pull a Taser on could just as easily pull a gun and shoot and kill the cop.

There was a black cop, Quincy Smith, for example, who pulled a Taser on a black suspect, Malcolm Orr, who was talking on his cellphone and had his right hand in his pocket. It was obviously cold out and he had a thick jacket on. The cop had his Taser out telling the

suspect to stop. The black guy just keeps walking away and looking at him and talking on his phone. He obviously had no respect for police.

The suspect realizes that the cop has got a Taser, and he knows he's got a gun, so the black guy pulls his hand out of his pocket which has his gun, and starts shooting the cop, and all the cop can do is try to run away.

He gets hit a couple of times. Luckily the suspect leaves and doesn't come after him, but the suspect fires eight shots which you can hear in the video. Somebody who lives in the neighborhood came over to help the cop, but the guy ends up getting arrested and was later found guilty of attempted murder on a cop.

That's a great example of what cops deal with. It's easy to sit there when you don't know any better, you don't have any friends or family in law enforcement, but when you see a video like that of what our police encounter all of the time, daily facing life or death situations, we can all understand.

If you look at many cops, they tend to show signs of the difficulties they have to face. Many of them tend to be overweight; they often have huge bags under their eyes. It takes a horrible toll on them, and on their families. Police Officers have a statistically high divorce rate and they see death and destruction every day. They deal with the worst of society; they see the things that most people don't see.

So, we've got to be compassionate because it's not as if they are getting rich by doing this for a living. The working conditions suck, the pay sucks, and at a moment's notice you can be summarily executed, murdered by a criminal who is not even going to lose a second of sleep over killing you.

Unity Consciousness versus Polarity Consciousness

These incidents of racial violence have a way of dividing people into separate factions. There are those who side with the victims, and those who side with the system. The division only leads to more tension, and ultimately, more violence.

The truth of it is that we're all affected by these acts of violence. If we have any hope to change things, we need to change the way we think. It is only when we come to realize that we are all connected in a global unity, and that the actions of one person affect all people, that we can find a solution.

Unity consciousness is, "Hey, we're all in this together." It's learning to walk in the other person's shoes and looking through their eyes and trying to really understand where they come from and why they think the way they think.

Polarity consciousness is the opposite. This is the mentality of 'us' versus 'them.' In fact, this polarity is at the heart of every conflict, every clash, and just about every act of violence in history.

If we look at it globally, that's a big part of where we're at, and why we are here. Everything is 'us' versus 'them', Left versus Right, good versus evil, but humanity is just slowly moving through this.

It is only when we grow past this stage of our development that we will finally find peace.

To get back to my personal story again – the lessons that I learned during my High School years shaped my way of thinking, and played a huge part in becoming the person I am today.

High School – The People Who Shaped My World View

“Worthless people love only to eat and drink; people of worth eat and drink only to live.”

~ Socrates

High School was an important paradigm shift in my life. As I was growing into a young man I started to assert my independence from my family. I started seeing how different I was. I started thinking about the ways I wanted to be, which didn't necessarily agree with what they wanted.

It was during this part of my life that I came to one of the most important insights about life, success, and friendship. It had to do with choosing your friends and associates, and I'd like to describe the road that led to that understanding.

At the time, my eyes were opening to the truth about a lot of things.

For example, as my mother got older, she found more and more reasons to judge people. She would make up her mind that they were just awful human beings, and she would simply boot them from her life.

When we first moved to Illinois, she was friends with all of the other women and mothers in the neighborhood, but one by one she decided that they were assholes, or back biting phony bitches, and stopped speaking with them. The same pattern repeated itself when we moved down to South Florida.

She would start out being friends with a lot of people in the neighborhood, but one by one she would find reasons to dislike them. One by one she stopped being friends with the other mothers in the neighborhood, to the point where she wouldn't even talk to them anymore.

In earlier years she went out with them, she hung out, they went over to each other's houses, smoked cigarettes – both my parents smoked back then. All that changed over the years. I started to see the pattern.

Another thing I realized was that my dad just kind of went along and did whatever my mother wanted, just to keep the peace. She would nag and bitch and complain. He would pretend that he was listening, shake his head every so often, while he was watching sports on the TV and drinking his beer.

He would just keep going on about his business.

I realized in middle school, that as I got older, I would have no friends at all if I behaved like my parents. I was less judgmental when I was younger, and so I had quite a few friends. I also managed to hang on to the best ones. As I got older I did lose touch with a few friends, and I can probably count the number of true friends that have stuck with me on one hand. But those friends I keep.

Those are my 'board of director' type of friends. They are my real friends, not fake friends or phony posers. Very few people you will meet in life are truly loyal and belong in your inner circle. It has been said that you become like the 5 people you spend most of your time with.

I listen to them about business, or about life or relationships, or money, or real estate or construction. They're a handful of friends who are really close to me, and who've been with me for a really long time. They're the kinds of friends that always have a positive word of encouragement even when you're going through a difficult time.

After middle school ended, I went to Pompano Beach High School for my freshman year. That was actually where my mother and father had both gone to school in their day. My mom's picture and state swim team championships trophies were still outside the gymnasium in the trophy cases. It was funny seeing her with her beehive hairdo that was bleached blond from the chlorine in the pool.

It was a very different environment to the one I was used to. We were allowed to go off campus, to go to lunch, and things of that nature. I wasn't in fear for my life like I was when I went to Pompano Middle School. It was a relief to be going to school there.

Everybody got along, and there wasn't the same intense racial tension, hatred and violence that I experienced in middle school. The Haitian kids were the only ones who regularly seemed to get into fights. Many of them practiced martial arts and would start out with a little friendly sparring in the hallways for fun. Then as soon as one of them hit the other a little too hard, it was on, Bruce Lee style. We had these tall vertical windows in the buildings and sometimes they would kick each other through the windows into a classroom that was in session. Surprise!

I had a Haitian classmate, I can't remember his name anymore since it was over 30 years ago, who loved martial arts and used to teach me some of his moves. I was also taking martial arts classes at the time. He was a badass, ripped and strong like Bruce Lee, but a very kind and humble man. He was a good buddy who looked out for me. Everybody respected and looked up to him.

The trouble was that I was starting to become bored with schoolwork.

In the past I had always done well at school. I wanted to make my parents proud, and so I worked hard and excelled. At one point I was doing so well that I attended advanced classes – they were called honors classes. I took advanced trigonometry, and some other subjects. But it required a lot of homework to be done, and I was

slowly getting lazy. I was spacing out a lot, and not really paying attention. I ended up getting so far behind that I changed back, and continued with the regular classes instead.

I was starting to come into my own personality, and question the authority, and the wisdom of my parents. I was starting to realize that they didn't have all the answers.

When you're little, you believe everything your parents tell you. You think your mom and dad know everything, and in a way, they are really the center of your universe. Around twelve years old, kids start expressing who they are, and want to be themselves. Of course, that's what happened to me too.

There's a quote from Dr. Wayne Dyer that really makes sense to me:

"Kids come through you, they don't come for you."

I thought that this was a pretty accurate observation on parenting. Your job as a parent is to help your kids become *who they are*, and to help them succeed in the world, and learn from your mistakes. It's not to imprint your life onto them or cause your children to become *who you think they should become*.

The more you try to control children, the more they rebel and hide who they really are from you. That's why a lot of parents are shocked to find that their kids are having sex in middle school, or that they're doing drugs. They just have no idea what their kids are really like. There is a divide, a disconnect, and a communication gap. They imagine that they're really good parents, but then their kid gets in trouble or suffers a drug overdose, or starts drinking – the parents are just stunned.

Sri Amma Bhagavan once said:

“From the time a child is born until the age of six, you treat them like a king or a queen. From ages 6 to 12 like a prince or princess. Older than that, you treat them like a friend.”

At the end of the day, if parents don't have a close relationship with their kids, the kids just basically end up lying to their parents and doing what they're going to do anyway.

If you cultivate a great friendship with your child, the lines of communication stay open. There is mutual respect, trust and openness. Discipline becomes easier – and many times unnecessary. It becomes guidance instead.

Who better to teach a kid about the world than a parent, who's been through life's hardships and lessons already? When it comes to drinking, smoking weed, or sex – a parent should be the one to give guidance. My parents didn't talk to me about any of that stuff. I had to figure out everything on my own.

Unfortunately, as I started to express my own personality, I was also starting to become sad and depressed. I was brooding over things too much, but in a way, those were the fires that forged the person I was to become.

I was really starting to question life, and wondering what it's all about. I was asking myself – what the hell is the whole purpose? Who are we? Why are we here, why do we do what we do?

At the same time, maybe even as a result of these constant questions, I was starting to become less and less excited about school. Half way through freshman year I became really demotivated. More than constantly struggling with these questions of life, I was really struggling with trying to be happy with myself.

The kids I was going to school with were drawing pot leaves on their folders, talking about doing drugs and partying. Doing badly on tests, not doing homework, or rebelling against the school system was a

badge of honor. If you failed, or kicked against the system, you were celebrated for failing. Doing well at school meant you were a nerd. You were an outcast. You were a weirdo.

I think my parents recognized that, and one of the best things they ever did for my brother and me, and one of the things I'm most grateful for, was sending us to a Catholic high school - Cardinal Gibbons High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Most of the kids I had been going to school with didn't really have much ambition. They were happy to accept a blue-collar lifestyle, and a lot of them didn't have the intention to go to college. Some of them were dropping out at the age of sixteen. Kids were driving beat up cars, jalopies with Bondo body-filler on them, and grey spray paint.

When I transferred, it was to a school that prepared you for college. Many of the kids in this new school came from wealthy and successful families. Instead of beat up jalopies, these kids were driving Panteras and Porches, BMW's, Mercedes or turbocharged Mustang SVO's. It was a different world altogether.

But it was not just the average income of the parents that was higher. The expectations from life, the standard of work, and the entire mindset was different too.

Failing a test was no longer a badge of honor. Getting poor grades didn't make you fit in. If you didn't do well in school here, you were just an idiot. It was going to be a challenge for me to adjust to the new environment. I needed something to help motivate me, and so I was very lucky to make a great friend the year I transferred.

His parents were both from India, but he lived with his uncle, who was a very successful and wealthy eye doctor. It was nothing like what I had been used to until then. They lived on the Intercoastal Waterway in this beautiful two-story mansion, and one day I was invited to stay over.

There was a party on Fort Lauderdale beach, and because of where I lived and the fact my parents did not allow me to drive at night, the only way I could do something like that was to stay at a friend's. Up until that point in my life I'd never really been around people who had money. I worked at the laundromat when I wasn't in school. My neighborhood wasn't in the same league at all.

The world I came from was very different. Most of the kids I grew up with came from blue-collar families. Their parents worked for the phone company, or they were electricians or construction workers. Mine was a neighborhood of low to average income, and mediocrity at best. The old man who lived across the street from me had his arm blown off in the D-Day invasion during World War II. He used to sit on the porch every day, the sleeve on one side of his body flapping in the wind as he stared blankly at the traffic going past. That was my world.

But this was something else.

I remember the feeling of awe as I walked into this house. Over the middle of the living room there was a cat-walk that went over from one side of the house to the other, where all the bedrooms were. There was an amazing view. The kitchen was unbelievable. My friend's cousin drove a Porsche.

But as impressive as all of this was, that's not really what got me thinking.

What impressed me more than the sight of the house was the fact that instead of feeling intimidated, I was made to feel at home. My friend's family was very gracious – and that's not what I was expecting. I had grown up with preconceptions about rich people. In my mind they were snobs, and they were untouchable. They were somehow set apart from regular people. But to my surprise, I discovered just how wrong I had been all this time.

Instead of assholes, here were the nicest people you could imagine. My friend's uncle wore a turban, and he had a beautiful blonde wife, and the whole family made me feel completely welcome, and at home.

It was a revelation. These were just regular people. They weren't any smarter or better than me, but here I was in the biggest house I'd ever been inside in my life. Here I was in a multi-million dollar house, with nice furniture, nice cars – and I realized that they were just people after all.

In fact, the more I got to know some of the people from that neighborhood, I realized that they tended to be nicer than many of the people I had known in poorer suburbs. They weren't as stressed. They had a different outlook on life – which tended to be less resentful, and more positive.

I learned something vital from going to Cardinal Gibbons. The fact is, it made me want to do better. It made me want to do well in school. In this environment, if you were dumb, it wasn't something to be proud of. It wasn't cool. If you failed, you weren't seen as a daring rebel; you were simply a failure. Most of the people that went to Gibbons ended up going off to college and getting degrees. But of course, that was no guarantee that it would turn out well for them in the end.

Not all of those kids from wealthy and successful families ended up being wealthy and successful themselves. They may have had all the advantages growing up. They went to the best schools, wore the best clothes, had the nicest cars, but even though they had all the breaks, even though they were born with a silver spoon in their mouth, so to speak, they ended up with bullshit jobs, and didn't get to experience anywhere near the success that their parents achieved.

Some of these kids had parents that were always traveling around the world. Many of them were raised by nannies, and a lot of them were

just kind of fucked up. I realized something from getting to know them: When you don't have both parents constantly in your life, when they're not around to guide you and support you, to hug you and provide your base – you're at a disadvantage. Even though those kids seemed to have everything they could want, at least financially, even if they were born with a silver spoon in their mouths, they eventually led lives that were not too remarkable. They became average people. They weren't driven, and they weren't successful.

Only much later in life did I start to piece together all the factors that add up, the ones that make all the difference. It's something I will touch on again later, but here I would like to mention one very important point.

What I noticed was that kids that came from solid families, where there was love and support, where the parents were happy, and the family was close – those kids tended to believe in themselves more, and found it easier to take risks.

It didn't always make them successful, though. There was more to it than just having opportunities. I was beginning to understand that it was also about having the right kind of drive, mindset, and about your expectations from yourself, and from your life.

It really boils down to the story that you tell yourself about who you are and what you are capable of being and becoming. Human beings will act consistently with how they view themselves to be. It does not matter whether that view is accurate or not. We choose what things mean to us, good or bad. Most people are simply unconsciously unaware of this. We do what we do because of the story we tell ourselves. If you see yourself as being worthy and deserving of your hearts desires, you will take action to make that happen. If you see yourself as being unworthy and undeserving, you will invent a story that justifies not doing what it takes to succeed, or outright sabotaging yourself on purpose.

“Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.” ~ William James, American psychologist & philosopher

Coming from a family background where I struggled so much, and had such a low opinion of myself, made me want to do better. As I approached graduation and turned eighteen, and was about to go to college – I just wanted to get out of my home.

I was starting to come to an understanding that was to change everything for me. My personal paradigms were starting to shift.

I was starting to realize that the people you surround yourself with have a tremendous effect on your mindset, your expectations from life, and the way you think and behave. I wanted to associate with successful and positive people, those that made me feel worthwhile, and who had higher goals in life. Getting the opportunity to go to Gibbons was of incredible value to me in my personal development. Up until that point in my life I had never experienced being around people like that.

In later years I’ve seen it confirmed over and over that people will always tend to gravitate towards the accepted standard of life in their environment. People who live off government grants, people who live in the ghettos will tend to become stuck in that form of life. Generation after generation will follow the same pattern – not working, and living off a government hand-out, complaining about their lot in life, but unwilling to take the initiative and get out of that situation.

Like attracts like – you become who you associate with. You’re going to be an average of the five people you spend most of your time with.

I later came to appreciate the following words of wisdom from Tony Robbins: *“The quality of your life is in direct proportion to the quality of the people who you consistently spend your time with. The*

quality of your life is in direct proportion to the expectations of your peer group.”

Not every kid that went to Gibbons had wealthy parents. There were kids whose parent’s really struggled to put them through school there. They attended Gibbons for a year or two, but had to go back to public school when their parents couldn’t afford it anymore. There were other kids whose parents just barely scraped by, and they just made it to graduation.

Some of the kids were great athletes, and came in on a sport scholarship. Some of those were my friends, or were in the same grade as me, and in a lot of ways they were the lucky ones. The best of them got to go to UM, University of Miami, and if they did well in football, they even went on to play in the NFL for a couple of years. They got a degree, and got to play pro football, and got to make some serious money. Even though professional players didn’t get the big contracts or get paid the enormous salaries of today, it was still a very good future. It gave you opportunities. A lot of that has to do with your surroundings – the people around you constantly.

The quality of the people you hang out with is going to have a huge impact on what you become. When you associate with other people who are more successful than you, and with people that have goals and dreams and ambitions, you’re naturally going to want to be more like them. If you hang out with people that are negative, that are going nowhere, that bitch and complain, that hate themselves and the world – you get social proof of negative beliefs. You feel justified in having those opinions, because everybody around you thinks and lives in the same way. It colors your outlook on life, and it changes everything.

When you escape your socio-economic background, and start associating with people living on a higher level, you start to change. It makes you want to improve yourself. And naturally, you start finding opportunities to do exactly that.

I am forever grateful to my parents for giving me the chance to attend that school. If I had stayed in public school, I don't know where I would be at this point in life.

I'm forever indebted to the great friends I made there, because of the positive influence they've had on me. They helped me become the kind of person I wanted to be. They always had positive things to say, whether I was up or down in life. They were the people I chose to spend most of my time with, and as a result, that's the kind of person I started to become.

Overcoming Shyness and Feelings of Inferiority

My mother's parenting style meant that I grew up at a disadvantage – speaking in terms of emotional development. Because she tended to be very cold and distant, I grew up without a solid emotional base. I never learned how to express my love easily and naturally.

If you've read the book *The Five Love Languages* – by Gary Chapman, you will know that people each have their own preferred language in which to express their love. My mother did it by buying us gifts, rather than by means of hugs or kind words.

She never showed us affection in any overt ways. We basically got yelled at when we did something wrong – but there was very little positive reinforcement or validation for us as individuals. I think a lot of teenagers struggle with similar problems, and it often leads to them feeling shy, or inferior.

I've added this lesson to the story here, because I grew up feeling so shy and insecure, and what I learned in later years really changed the game for me. So if you are struggling with feelings of inferiority, or you have trouble just being yourself in public – then what I learned might be of benefit to you. As a former shy person, I know what it takes to overcome these things.

If you don't get a balanced sense of validation, growing up as a child, you grow up feeling unsure about your place in life. You can easily feel scared and paranoid that you're doing the wrong thing. Kids at school can be mean, and it can really injure your self-esteem.

These scars last for years, because we become emotionally anchored to thinking and feeling, or accepting belief structures that get in the way of our true selves.

Very young kids are generally perfectly natural. At first, all they want to do is jump into puddles, or play with a cardboard box for

days, and they still have the ability to get excited about the silliest things. As we grow up we start taking on the limiting belief structures of our friends, family and wider social circles. We start to feel afraid or ashamed of the things we want in life. We lose that sense of wonder and naturalness.

For me it happened because I often felt that I didn't know whether something I was thinking or feeling would be considered "right" or "wrong." I didn't know what was acceptable. I felt like an outsider. I decided it was better if I just shut up and said nothing at all. I kept all of these things inside. If you ask anyone at school about me – especially the girls – they would say, "Corey was always so quiet."

Well if you see me today you might change your opinion. The point is – shutting it all inside is the worst possible thing you can do.

Everyone is completely unique. You've got quirks in your personality, and you've got talents, and gifts and things that you're naturally inclined towards, that nobody else on this planet has. If you believe that god made us exactly the way we are – with the big ears, or the funny nose, or the strange ways we walk – then you can begin to accept it – and even to laugh at it. You stop taking everything so seriously – most of all yourself.

We're all different and we're all awkward as teenagers. The trick is to get through it, and learn, so these patterns don't continue deep into our adult lives.

The reason I felt shy and inferior back then was because I was looking for approval from someone outside of myself.

When we do this, we are actually giving our personal power away. We also unconsciously hand over the responsibility for making ourselves happy. We put our own happiness in the hands of others, in the hope that they will accept us, which will then give us reason to be happy. If you think about it, it's insane – but that's what we do.

“Care about what other people think and you will always be their prisoner.” ~ Lao Tzu

We make a conscious choice that we are not valid or good enough in the eyes of others unless they give us validation. If they validate and accept us as being cool, or good, then we feel good about ourselves. If they do not accept us, but criticize us instead, we feel terrible about ourselves. As a result, our lives become filled with suffering. We desperately wish they would accept us - but they don't. We want things to be other than they are. When we do not accept reality, or simply accept that things are the way they are, we suffer, every time.

Here's what I know about shy people. Shy people do not speak up because they have made the wrong choice to accept the limiting belief that they do not have anything valuable to say.

I learned to use humor to defuse other people's insults. I always assumed that those “insults” came from a good place, deep down. The way I learned to see it, was that they actually did like me, and they were just testing me to see how I would respond. My close friends and I were always teasing one another. We made fun of one another all the time. We didn't take it personally.

If you just laugh things off and use self-deprecating humor – then it communicates to others that you are unattached to what they think of you. Their insults cease to have any power over you.

You have to understand that it's not really about you at all – and this is something you will hear me repeat time and time again.

Human beings tend to attack the things in others that they don't like about themselves.

They tend to attack and ridicule personality characteristics in other people that are similar to their own personality characteristics – especially the ones that they are disconnected from, or not comfortable with expressing in themselves. For example, if someone

is very unhappy, they will attack and ridicule people they perceive as being happy. “Wipe that stupid smile off your face...”

Take the higher ground and realize that the people who attack you are attacking you because you are comfortable expressing a part of yourself. They are uncomfortable with it in themselves, and they are disconnected from it in their own hearts. Basically they are jealous of your high level of comfort and acceptance of yourself.

Deep down, they want to be like you.

On the other hand, when you take their insults personally, you display weakness. This actually makes them want to attack you even more, because you are demonstrating that you are unsure of your truth. If you allow them to diminish you, they will continue to believe that their dysfunctional way of showing up and interacting with other human beings is acceptable. They will continue to believe it is the truth, and a valid way to think and behave. These people are really screaming out for your help and your leadership, and you let them down when you let them diminish you. Instead of uplifting them with your humor and love, you are validating and contributing to the problem.

One of my teachers once told me that shy people actually have more to say than most people do. But when you hold who you are inside, instead of giving the world the gift of your God-given magnificent personality, we all lose.

Making that wrong choice affects everyone around you in a subtle way too.

When someone shows up in life, and they are confident enough to be exactly who they are, without worrying whether or not other people accept or appreciate them, then it gives everyone else around them the unconscious permission to do the same.

As you go through life and become older and wiser, you will make new friends. When we are younger, we tend to form friendships with people because we want their approval and acceptance. But we eventually realize that most of those friendships are not based upon genuine appreciation for each other's uniqueness, but based upon conforming to someone else's version of what they think is cool and acceptable.

As I've grown older, my circle of friends has shrunk, but the quality of my friendships that I do have is very deep and rich. Quality over quantity.

Everyone on the planet likes to be accepted, loved and appreciated. When we learn to love and accept the fact that we are perfect, exactly the way God created us, even with all of our flaws and faults, only then do we create the conditions where we can unconditionally love and accept others.

We are all connected. The same force is beating all of our hearts, growing our hair, growing our fingernails, and everything else. As a matter of fact, this physical world of ours, from a quantum physics perspective (and that includes you and I), blinks into and out of existence approximately 60,000,000 times a second! So you could say, that you're really not here... unless you are. "In Lak'ech" (een la-kesh), is a phrase from the Mayan People that means, "I am another you and you are another me."

Jesus understood this. He understood that all of us are part of the mind and body of God. As Deepak Chopra says, "We are the eyes of the universe looking at itself." Jesus understood and stated that we are all one. His ultimate act of love and forgiveness was uttered while he was nailed to the cross. He looked down upon those that had put him there and were craving his death and said, "Forgive them father, for they know not what they do."

If you're struggling with shyness, or insecurities, remember these two important nuggets of wisdom:

No one will ever do or say anything to you that is not a direct reflection of how they feel about themselves in a moment.

No one will ever do or say anything to you that you do not invite them to do.

The College Years

“Courage is resistance to fear, master of fear – not absence of fear.”

~ Mark Twain

After completing high school, it was time to decide my future, and to choose a line of study. I had a few options. If I went to Florida State University in Tallahassee, I could major in real estate, if I went to University of Florida in Gainesville Florida, I could major in construction management. In my heart I always knew I was going to choose to study construction.

“If you do not study hard when young, you’ll end up bewailing your failures as you grow up.”

~ Chinese Proverb

Ever since I was a kid I have loved working with my hands, taking things apart, and designing and building new things. For some time already I had dreamed about buying, fixing up, and selling single-family homes for a profit.

One of my friends grew up down the street from me. When the old lady who lived just across the street from us passed away, that friend’s father bought her house, and started fixing it. He did most of the work on it himself. I used to go over there and watch him work. I thought it was really cool to see the project take shape. It just made sense to me.

The yard was shitty and full of sticker burs, mostly dead. The house was old and run down. I think it had been built in the 1950’s. It

needed a new roof, and the kitchen was really old. Over the course of about six months I watched him transform the place. He put new windows in, and he painted it, and fixed the carport. (A lot of the older houses in South Florida don't have garages, they have carports).

He cleaned up the yard, installed sprinkler systems, and installed a completely new kitchen. It looked incredible when he was done with it. I was really impressed, and I enjoyed watching it happen. I could see myself doing something like that for a living.

Another big influence was my grandfather, on my dad's side. He was a really talented carpenter, and an all-round handyman. He had his own toolshed, and whenever I had a project he used to help me.

I used to keep cockatiels when I was a kid. My grandfather built me a breeding box for my birds, complete with a nesting box. He helped my dad build the fort in the back garden, and the turtle pond I loved so much. He was very handy, and I enjoyed that kind of work.

At the coin laundry my grandfather helped my parents build an office area in the front. He could build anything. When I needed help with a project, my grandfather would pull out his tools and build something really cool.

It was in my blood. I loved to do things with my hands – I loved taking shit apart. Radios and speakers would be ripped to pieces so I could get at the magnets and parts inside. I would pull toys apart and take the motor out, and I loved building things. I was good at seeing something in my mind's eye, and then figuring it out, and creating it.

One time I built this tree fort with some kids from the neighborhood. It was a couple of stories up, and we created this platform with a square hole in it, and a rope with a pulley. At the other end of the rope was a big laundry basket, so the pulley would crank up the laundry basket full of wood.

On the other side of the railroad tracks there was a company that manufactured things from wood, like doors, doorframes and fittings. There was always a dumpster outside with all the scrap wood we wanted. We would go there on weekends and look for plywood, doors and doorjambs, two-by-fours and bits and pieces of scrap. All we had to do was buy the nails.

We had four or five kids in the neighborhood working on the tree fort project, and it got pretty big in the end. I loved doing stuff like that. For me it made sense to major in construction management, and learn how to build things.

I later got into doing real estate and mortgages too, but just after high school, all I wanted to do was build. The choice was made. I would go to the University of Florida. But, quite frankly, my grades weren't good enough to go to a major University, so I had to complete some required courses at a Community College first.

I registered for the local community college, the same one my dad went to. It was called Broward Community College, or BCC for short. We used to call it Beer Can College as a joke.

I remember the first day. I saw five or six of my high school friends, and it felt weird going to school, and seeing so many people who you'd known for years, but now it was a different world. We all had that typical 'deer in the headlights' look. This was a huge college campus, with thousands of students. It was a new world to conquer. In college they didn't give a shit if you showed up for class or not, so long as you've paid. They didn't call your parents. You simply didn't matter.

Some of my close friends had achieved better grades than me, and so they went off to university, moved away, joined fraternities and sororities. I was stuck at Beer Can College, taking Basic English, Science, and Philosophy. It didn't matter, though. I was determined. I had a goal; I had a vision for what I wanted to do. I wanted to

eventually get a degree in construction management, and get a contractor's license. That meant a lot of work on my part.

I had taken a job when I was eighteen years old, working at Service Merchandise. I used to move boxes around, and work at the cash register, set up displays and help customers. It was good for me in the sense that it taught me about hard work, and gave me some valuable experience in dealing with people, and I learned things that would later help me. Together with the work from college, I had very little time to think about anything else – but that's when life threw another one of its famous curve balls my way.

I came home one day from class and there were wet footprints on the floor...

Breaking with Reality

“Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Before I describe the scene, and what happened after that, I want to give you a little bit of background on what happened to my mother – the events that led up to one of the most significant moments in my life.

As I mentioned, my parents had bought a coin laundry business, and they both worked hard to take it from the verge of failure and losing their entire investment and instead they turned it into a success. The funds had originally come from the money my mother inherited when my grandmother died of cancer and my parent’s small stock investments in Walmart, Zayre and elsewhere – investments that had performed quite well at the time.

My parents worked hard, and secured some steady business accounts with hotels, and did a full wash, dry and fold service. After building the business for a few years, they sold it. The man who bought their business traded in another laundry, one that wasn’t doing too well, throwing that into the deal. My parents had all the experience in taking a struggling laundry business and turning it into a success, so it worked out well for them. Most of the proceeds from the sale were put back into the stock market.

There was a significant amount of cash from the sale of the business, and my parents were basically retired at that point. They were set. My mother put all the money back into the stock market. Encouraged by her previous success, she thought she was a real whizz at stock trading.

Then Black Monday arrived.

It was during my junior year, on October 19, 1987, that the stock markets around the world crashed, shedding a huge value in a very short time. The crash began in Hong Kong and spread like cascading dominos west through Europe, and finally hitting the United States. The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) fell exactly 508 points to 1,738.74 (22.61%)

It was a disaster for us. My mom had bought a lot of stock ‘on margin’, which basically means you buy additional stock shares on credit. It’s like taking a loan from the brokerage. Because the market had suffered such a downturn, she had to sell all the shares at a significant loss. Most of the money they had made from the sale of the business, and had invested in those stocks, got wiped out in one day when their margin got called.

One moment they were basically retired, trading on the stock market, and the next moment my dad was forced to get a job again, and go back to work.

Over the years my mother had steadily pushed all of her friends away, and was disconnected with most people, including her sisters and her family. My brother and I were older, and didn’t need to be taken care of anymore. I was working between 25 and 30 hours a week at Service Merchandise. My brother was sixteen and driving himself to school. We didn’t need a lot of parenting from my mother, so she sat at home all day, and didn’t feel like she had much of a purpose in life.

This put a tremendous amount of stress on my mother. She didn’t eat really well as it was, and from then she consistently made bad choices where it came to her diet. Her physical health was running down, and her mental health was under extreme pressure too. She often used to tell my dad, “If we don’t sell this laundry business soon, I’m going to have a nervous breakdown!”

She was consumed by the stress of losing all our money, and the feelings of guilt weighed on her. She felt she had caused a terrible, unforgivable strain on the family, and she felt useless.

Then there was the fact that her grandmother had spent the latter half of her life institutionalized in a mental ward, with mental problems. I didn't know what they were exactly, more than likely it was a form of schizophrenia.

At first I hardly noticed it at all.

My mom would be lying on the couch, smiling and laughing, looking up at the ceiling, and it was as if she was talking to people that weren't there. When I asked her about it, she just laughed about it, and made some excuse that she was thinking about something funny. So I shrugged it off.

Then one day I came home and saw wet footprints coming from my parent's bedroom, leading to their office. I remember seeing the newspaper. It looked like someone had been reading the newspaper, and had just thrown it down, all the paper crumpled in a big mess. The lights were on, the TV was on, my mom's car was there – but she was nowhere to be found.

I walked into the bathroom and there was water everywhere. I didn't know what the hell had happened. It looked like the scene of a crime. Was it robbery? Was it kidnapping? Was she raped and kidnapped? I walked over to my bedroom, and checked the office. The phone was off the hook, thrown on the floor. There were puddles of water everywhere.

At the age of nineteen, just home from class, I was unprepared, and didn't know what to do. I had never been in this kind of situation. In a state of shock I immediately called my dad. I told him what I had found there. All kinds of things were going through my head as I described what I saw.

My dad, typically disinterested, told me he was busy working, and he would be there in an hour or two. I got really angry. Something had clearly happened to mom, so I told him to get his ass home right away.

It was a thirty-minute drive, so I just sat down and waited for him to get there, trying to make sense of it. All the while my mind was spinning, thinking of all the things that could have happened. It looked like someone had grabbed my mom out of the shower. I just couldn't understand it. Had she been kidnapped or murdered? It didn't seem real.

We had this big window looking out over the front of the house, and ten or fifteen minutes later I looked out and saw a car pull up. My mother was in the car with Trish, her best friend from college. I ran outside to see. My mother was sitting in the passenger seat. Her eyes were wide as an owl's, and she had a look of utter terror on her face. She was just sitting silently, wearing nothing but her blue bathrobe.

Trish started telling me what had happened. My mother had called her, but was acting really weird. She had been screaming, pleading with Trish: "You've got to come over and get me out of here!"

My mother wouldn't say anything to me. Looking into her eyes, it was like looking at a ghost. It was a dull, blank stare. Nobody was home. It was such a bizarre experience that I didn't know how to process it. I went to call my dad to find out if he'd left yet. This was a while before cell phones, so it meant I had to go back inside the house. When I couldn't reach my dad, I came back out, and the two of them had just left. It was insane.

When my dad finally showed up, I told him what had happened, and showed him the scene in the house.

Then, five minutes later, Trish came back – without my mom. In a state of panic she started to explain:

“I don’t know what’s going on with her,” she said, “we were driving over by Pine Crest School. She started yelling that demons and spirits are going to blow the car up. She shouted at me to stop!”

My dad and I looked at each other in disbelief.

Trish continued: “She was saying we’ve got to get out of the car, and she opened the door and was about to jump out. I slam on the brakes, and she just jumps out, and then starts pacing up and down along the road, in her bath robe, refusing to get back in the car.”

“Where is she now?” We asked.

“I don’t know! She just took off.”

My dad and I couldn’t believe what we were hearing, but we each got into our cars and immediately started looking for my mom. We called the police, and they started looking for her too. She had just disappeared.

She must have come back home at some point, and taken the keys to her van. She’d grabbed some jewelry – a gold graduation bracelet, and some other things, including our dog, and then just hauled ass. We didn’t know where the hell she was.

The police put out BOLO’s (Be On the Look Out for) with my mom’s description. Two days later they found the van, with our dog still locked inside of it, in the blistering heat. Who knows how long he’d been locked up in there.

Finally a policeman found my mother, still in her blue bathrobe, just aimlessly wandering around the neighborhood where my parents were planning to buy a house after they sold their business. They didn’t buy it, of course, because my mom had lost all the money.

The police later told us that she’d looked disheveled and confused, and when they asked her if they could help, she told them she lived on Kingston road. We didn’t live there, of course. The police officer

knew there was no Kingston road anywhere in the neighborhood. Kingston was the name of the model of house they were going to buy.

He ended up coaxing her into the squad car, and the result was that my mom got her first rude introduction to the Baker Act.

The Baker Act is a law in Florida that allows mentally ill people to be committed to a mental health facility for 72 hours, against the will of the mentally ill person. They are forcibly restrained and medicated, and held in the facility.

Two weeks later she came back home, after having been diagnosed with psychotic schizophrenia. I could tell something important had changed in my mother. She'd had a nervous breakdown, and hallucinated demons and spirits. She wasn't the same person she'd been before.

The thing is, there was never really any closure. The incident was just swept under the rug, almost casually, and my parents didn't deal with it directly. After she came back, there was no discussion. There was no family conference. There was no explanation of any kind. As time went on my mom would sometimes jokingly refer to the incident as the time "when I was looney." That was about all we heard about it directly.

The therapist later told my dad that my mother had spoken about those conversations on the couch. She had been talking with one of her high school boyfriends, who later got married and became a pilot. The whole family had tragically died in a plane crash some time ago. My mother believed she was talking to the spirits of the departed. In her mind, she was having a normal, everyday conversation with her ex-boyfriend, the high school sweetheart who just happened to be dead.

The psychiatrist had prescribed medication to control the mental condition to some extent. Unfortunately, my mother wasn't

cooperating. Her medication made her twitch a lot, and she was forever sitting with her legs crossed, and constantly twitching her foot. It made her feel antsy.

My mother never went through any counseling or therapy. Just being in the mental hospital for the two weeks cost ten or fifteen thousand dollars, back in 1989. The money wasn't available. We simply couldn't afford it. That just added more guilt, and more unbearable weight on my mother's shoulders.

Even so, for a while at least, things seemed to return to normal. My mother would joke about the events, and she seemed to be coping, at least, though not exactly recovering. For the first year or so she took her medication, as she was supposed to, even though she hated the way it made her feel.

It was a challenging part of my life. I tried to avoid the situation at home, so I stayed focused on college, while working 25 hours a week at Service Merchandise, and going to the gym whenever I could. My focus was just getting through it all. I had a lot to do. We didn't talk about it – it was in the past. My dad was very matter-of-fact about all of it. He casually went back to doing what he did best – watching TV and drinking beer.

My goal was to get through those two years, and transfer to the University of Florida. For the next year, until the age of 20, I went to Santa Fe Community College to complete my last prerequisites. I just wanted to get away from my family at that point.

Meanwhile my mother was denying everything about her condition. She told us that she was all better, but secretly she had gradually stopped taking her medication.

After three or four weeks I could tell my mother was slipping away again. She starting to see things that nobody else could see, and she was having imaginary conversations with people. While it was

happening, my dad was sitting, drinking his beer, and pretending it wasn't happening. So I confronted him.

"Mom's acting really fucking weird," I said, expecting him to react, to open up at least, or talk about it.

But it didn't happen that way. He was hoping the problem would magically solve itself and just go away. In a way, I could understand his dilemma. He was focused on the costs, and that was a real problem. But I felt that he was making it worse by simply avoiding the problem.

Then after a month or two, my mother totally lost her mind once again. She got in the van one day, in a fearful state of mind. My brother jumped in front of the van, trying to stop her from driving off, but she was consumed by such terror that she gunned the van straight towards him. He barely escaped from being hit and run over.

Later she was really remorseful about it, but at the time she just wanted to get out of there. She was so overcome by fear and paranoia – she felt she needed to escape. I clearly remember the look of absolute dread in her eyes. It was so sad and so very strange to see the metamorphosis.

She was never the same person again after that first episode. In a lot of ways I feel that the woman I knew as my mother died that day. The person that was left afterwards was somebody else. She was constantly drifting in and out of psychosis, and had to be committed two or three times after that.

It was something that cast a dark cloud over our lives at the time, and it filled me with confusion and a kind of desperation.

I remember one day in 1990 things became so desperate that we had to call for help. Three Broward County Sheriff's deputies came around. They were huge, sturdy men that looked like they were all body builders. My mother weighed a mere 110 pounds, but they still

struggled to restrain her. I remember how they had to put handcuffs on her, because she was resisting with all her might.

“You’re not taking me, you’re not taking me!” She was screaming at the top of her lungs. Of course all our neighbors came out. Soon they were all standing in the driveway with their hands on their hips, watching and gawking, as if they were watching a circus act, or an animal in the zoo.

I didn’t know how to process the feelings I was experiencing. It was embarrassing. I couldn’t believe that this was happening again. The three deputies had my mother handcuffed. My mom was in her blue bathrobe again. She kicked her legs out stiffly, so they couldn’t put her in the car. They were forced to hog-tie her with a chain, and then they laid her on her stomach in the back of the squad car.

It was time for the Baker Act once again, and I watched the squad car disappear as they drove her to the asylum. A week or two later she came back, and went back onto her medication, on the doctor’s strict instructions.

My dad tried to make sure she swallowed her pills, but my mom became good at hiding them. In her own mind she still didn’t believe there was anything wrong with her, and imagined she could wean herself off the meds gradually, and regain her sanity without help from outside. In her reality, there was nothing wrong with her. In her reality, we were the ones to blame. We were persecuting her.

The sanity returned, more or less, at least for a while, but eventually she would have another episode. She would ‘go crazy again.’ The medical bills kept racking up over time, and my parents kept getting further and further into debt. Each time there was an episode, my mom would get angrier and meaner. She became this hateful, awful negative, mean, vindictive person when she was not on her meds.

During her episodes she would be belligerent, cursing and blaming us for committing her. Then it would calm down for a while again, to the point where it was almost normal again.

My mother got a job as an accountant for a while – accounting was her major in college. One day her employer called, saying we had to come get her right away. I realized she'd flipped out at work. I rushed over, and when I got there, she was laughing at everybody. She was saying things like:

“If you leave the room, the spirits are gonna get you.”

Everyone at the office was disconcerted. The police were there, and mom was handcuffed again, but at least this time they draped a jacket over her hands, to make it a little less obvious. She was just laughing the whole time, and I, of course, was more embarrassed than ever.

By the time I went to University she had been committed three or four times. The same pattern kept repeating itself. She'd stop taking meds and flip out. Each time it happened she would be committed again.

Eventually I just didn't feel safe around her anymore. She was getting worse, and the episodes were getting dangerous. It was while living in this kind of atmosphere that I went off to college. I had to find work there to pay my own way while I studied.

A Dark Time

“God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

~ 2 Timothy 1:7, Letter to Timothy written by Saint Paul the Apostle

I had been working from the age of sixteen, with no time off, so I desperately wanted to take two or three weeks off before I started again.

I requested a transfer from the Service Merchandise in Pompano Beach Florida, to the one in Gainesville Florida near the University of Florida. By transferring it would mean I could stay at my same level of pay. It was better than resigning, and starting fresh in the new town. I was making almost \$7 per hour in South Florida, but in a college town there's a surplus of cheap labor. They were only paying \$4.25 an hour.

When I finally went to Service Merchandise in Gainesville, they told me that they had been informed that I had quit – not transferred. They informed me that my brother, Chris (I helped him get a job there before I moved) had said that I was not going to be working up there. When I protested, and begged them to fix the mistake, the assistant store manager, a woman who I had worked for and been a great employee for many years, even winning employee of the month one time, simply replied:

“Sorry, we can't fix it. There's nothing I can do. Your brother said you quit and we took you out of the system.” She really didn't give a fuck.

There was nothing they could do. This twist of events was going to cost me \$400 or \$500 per month in lost income. It was a terrible blow.

My parents were helping me as best they could, given their circumstances, and paying for my basic rent and tuition fees, but I had to pay everything else out of my own pocket.

It was really hard to make ends meet. I only stayed up there for one semester. I was working 30 or 40 hours a week, while still attending classes, and after my bills I had very little left over.

It was a dark time for me.

There was another weird and morbid event that played out during this time of my life, and although it didn't affect me directly, it's interesting how things are connected. Call it coincidence or synchronicity – the events of our lives are interwoven with all kinds of destinies. There was a kind of shadowy side to all of it – and it was another reflection of the events in my personal life.

In late summer of 1990, about a month into the semester we started hearing reports that University of Florida students were being murdered. They were later known as the Gainesville student murders. Five people were murdered by a man named Daniel Harold Rolling, the so-called Gainesville Ripper. We knew him as Danny.

He started by raping and killing two freshmen roommates - Sonya Larson and Christina Powell on August 24. He then dismembered the corpses, and left a bloody display, with mutilated bodies in sexually suggestive positions. When he was done, he apparently ate a banana and an apple from their kitchen – nonchalant and cold as ice.

One of the kids who grew up in my neighborhood was also living up in Gainesville at the time. He happened to live right next door to the two girls. He told my brother he'd heard banging on the walls next door, but assumed that they were simply hanging pictures. Little did

he know that Rolling was nailing their intestines to the walls. He saw the horrible scene when the police arrived, days later. It was like something straight out of a horror movie.

The next day, Rolling raped and stabbed Christa Leigh Hoyt, then he cut her nipples off and severed her head, positioning it like a bookend on a shelf to appear as though it was looking at the body.

There was widespread panic all across Gainesville for a while. An unknown madman was on the loose, hiding, and just waiting to catch his next victim unawares. Many fled from the school, including my friend, the victim's neighbor.

The lights were left on overnight everywhere in town. Some of my friends and I actually played football in the middle of the night, after going out drinking in 30 degree weather, because the fields were all lit up at night. Of course, we didn't like to walk back home alone. Nobody did. There was a deep feeling of paranoia everywhere. People stocked up on personal security measures and slept in shifts. Nobody wanted to be at home alone, especially at night. Classes shut down for a week.

Even so, Danny broke into the apartment of Manny Tabouda and Tracy Paules. Tabouda was a big young man, weighing over two hundred pounds, and he fought back, but Rolling eventually subdued and killed him. Then he raped and killed Tracy Paules, and like the others, he left a gruesome, perverse display.

Then the murders stopped as quickly and as mysteriously as they had started. When the murderer was finally caught, the entire town breathed a sigh of relief. It was finally over. The authorities determined that the murderer suffered from antisocial personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, and paraphilia (which is an intense sexual attraction to atypical objects, like corpses). Rolling also claimed to be possessed by demons.

So this was the kind of backdrop to my final days in Gainesville. Besides my friend, who was the neighbor of the first two victims, it later turned out there was another connection, which I will talk about later in the book, during my time working at Centex Rooney Construction Company. The sister-in-law of one of the victims, Sonia Larson worked with me there, and was the victim of another brutal rape and murder. It's as if there were invisible, tangential lines of connection to these dark events in my life.

Here I was, desperately trying to make something of my life, and hoping to create a better reality for myself, while all around me people seemed to be going in the opposite direction. A brutal murderer had broken with reality, and committed these horrible crimes, while back at home, my mother had broken with reality too. Perhaps it doesn't make sense to compare the two, but these kinds of things weighed on my mind. It just added to my feelings of gloom and hopelessness.

One of the last classes I had to take was Calculus, and it proved to be the tipping point for me. It reminded me so clearly of how my mother always said I was too stupid to amount to anything. It always makes me think of something I learned from Tony Robbins:

People will do more to avoid pain than they will do to gain pleasure.

Calculus was pain for me, but admitting I was stupid was even more painful.

It felt inevitable, though. There was no way I was going to make it. I moved back and got my old job back at Service Merchandise.

"It is difficulties that show what men are."

~ Epictetus

Dealing with Reality

“A single conversation across the table with a wise man is worth a month’s study of books.”

~ Chinese Proverb

I turned 21 in January, when I returned to Fort Lauderdale. While I was stuck working back at Service Merchandise, all my friends were going off to Daytona Beach for spring break.

But life has a way of providing a few twists, and as long as you’re willing to stay open to the possibility, as long as you’re willing to take a risk, there’s always the chance of a positive outcome. You must be prepared to take advantage of opportunities when life presents them.

One of my good friends came to the rescue. He might not have had all the best character traits on the whole, but he had a way of pushing me to be better, to do better with my life, and to expand my world.

“What if I could get you a job?” He asked me.

“Doing What?”

“Tending bar at Chuck’s Steakhouse.”

This was a place that we used to hang out at quite often, as college students, and I knew some of the people who worked there.

I didn’t have any experience as a bartender, but I was willing to learn. I was open to the idea, so we went over there, and just on a kind of whim, I applied for a job behind the bar.

“I heard you’re looking for a bartender for the day bar, and you’re willing to train?”

As luck would have it, the owner and I clicked. I was a clean cut kid, and I was sharp, and he saw something in me that made up his mind.

“Sure – can you start Monday in a week, 10 am?” He asked.

“Of course!” – And just like that it was set.

The first thing I did was drive straight back to Service Merchandise and resign. After how I’d been treated, I felt no sense of loyalty, and had no regrets about quitting. My manager was understandably upset, but more than that, he just basically had a kind of permanent, negative, controlling mindset.

I used to enjoy working there with one person in particular, because we always ended up having fun together, so this manager would split us up and make sure we didn’t work the same shifts. Plus there was the company’s attitude to my transfer to Gainesville. When I told my manager, he reacted badly.

“Who’s going to hire you? That’s ridiculous. You have no experience.”

There was no way I was going to let that stop me. My mind was made up, and it was high time for a change.

“And another thing,” I said, feeling a growing sense of enjoyment in what I was finally doing, “I’m leaving for Daytona in about an hour.”

“After everything I’ve done for you?”

In the end it was a really good decision. I ended up basically doubling my weekly income, and on top of that, I got to do something that I actually enjoyed.

I hopped in my car with my buddies, and ended up having a great time in Daytona. It was during that holiday that I lost my virginity – something I’ve already discussed in my first book, *How To Be A 3% Man*, so I won’t go into the details here.

Working at the bar was a great experience. My first customer ordered a Cuba Libre – and I had no idea what that was. But I soon learned, after all, it's just a rum and coke. I picked up everything I needed to know over the course of the following weeks. Before too long I knew everything about pouring and making the perfect drink, using the blenders, how much ice to use in a drink, which glass sizes to use, which frozen drinks need whip-cream, and mastering all the recipes for cocktails. I was even thinking that I might like to be a bartender for the rest of my life.

But it was never going to last. For one thing, this was back in the time when everyone could smoke at the bar. I didn't smoke at all, but the smoke was so thick that you could cut it with a knife. Even my shower at home started smelling like smoke, and it was horrible for me. I had skin problems, and the constant moisture on my hands was taking its toll. I started suffering from a skin condition sometimes called 'bar rot.'

Still, I was taking home between \$500 and \$700 a week, just on the day shift, and then I still got a couple of night shifts on top of that, and for once in my life, I had enough money to thrive instead of just staying afloat.

I was taking my upper level classes by now, but Calculus was still a big problem for me. Even if I completed all my other classes, I wouldn't be able to complete my degree until I overcame that final hurdle. And it was a big one.

I took that semester off, and worked at the bar during the day, and then I would go out with my friends at night and enjoy my life. At that point I wasn't even sure if I was going to follow through with graduating with a degree in Construction Management.

I was actually making more money at 21 tending bar than my dad was making in retail as a store manager. He couldn't believe I was making more money than him.

In a lot of ways, life was really great for me then. I bought myself a new Isuzu pickup truck, and had brand new rims and tires fitted, with step-bars on the side and a push bar in the front, plus a \$3,000 stereo system. It was tricked out. I moved in with one of my best friends, whose dad was really wealthy. They had a big house with lots of room, and it was only used for a couple of months a year. I moved into the old two-car garage that had been converted into a big room. The house had a bar in it, and all our friends used to come over and visit us. I had a queen size bed, and an entertainment center. My friend and I were living the high life. I had escaped the freak show at home, and for once, I was really enjoying my life.

It was only after about six months, that it started becoming clear to me that the bartending job was a dead end, and I was getting bored with it. On the one hand it was teaching me a great deal about dealing with all kinds of different people, but on the other hand, I knew it was only a stepping-stone to something bigger. A lot of my friends were finishing up their degrees and moving on with their lives already, and here I was, going nowhere slowly. Even though I basically had everything I needed, I didn't see a future for myself. I wasn't growing towards the kind of person I really wanted to become. It was just a temporary compromise.

Because I had dropped so many classes over my years of study so far, while working and having to deal with the situation at home, I still had years to go, even though I'd already spent four years in school.

It motivated me to keep taking classes.

Around that time I was spending a lot of time and money on a sideline passion of mine – salt-water mini reef fish tanks. Much of my income went to buying living coral, special light bulbs, expensive fish, filters and pumps. As it turned out, this was also the indirect connection to another source of inspiration in my life.

My roommate Roy, one of my best friends, and later also one of my groomsmen at my wedding, had a sister named Manuela. We were all friends, but at one point Manuela broke up with her boyfriend Calvin, (both of them were into fish tanks too), and Manuela moved in with us. She was a beautiful girl, but unfortunately off limits for me. I was good friends with her ex, and I didn't want to ruin my friendship with her brother either.

After a couple of months Manuela started dating a guy named Scott. He was older than us by a couple of years, and was a successful businessman. Back then he already had a cell phone mounted in his Toyota Forerunner, and he ran an entrepreneurial business that maintained and stocked lots of vending machines at the airports. I admired him, and saw him as a role model. He was like an older version of me – or at least, the way I saw myself a couple of years down the line. In my opinion, here was a guy who really had his shit together. Manuela and Scott dated after she broke up with Calvin for the 2nd and final time, and they eventually got married six months later. Scott was one of those people who come into your life – maybe for just a short time – but really motivate you to improve yourself. Spending time with them inspired me to get out of the rut I was settling into, and it set in motion a chain of events that led to the next stage of development in my life.

I needed to be taking names and kicking ass, not tending bar for the rest of my life.

I had been toying with the idea of turning my fish tank hobby into an entrepreneurial business, but I was going back and forth on a lot of different ideas. I was going to make filters and build tanks – but the thing was, I wasn't really passionate about it. I still honestly wanted to get into construction, but my mindset was holding me back. I thought I had to wait until I finished my degree, and that was just dragging on – thanks mostly to the mental block I had against completing Calculus.

In the end it was Dino, one of my buddies from FIU, who showed the way. He'd started working for a company called Centex Rooney as an intern, for \$8 an hour. He worked really hard and proved his worth, and was soon hired full time. Part of me felt annoyed that he was already so far ahead of me in life, but another part of me was just fired up to get going, and here was a way to do it. Scott and Manuela provided just the impetus I needed to get my ass into gear, and Dino showed me exactly how.

As an intern you work for next to nothing, so the company that hires you wins all the way. The intern also wins because it's a way to pick up some valuable experience in your chosen line of study. My thinking at the time was that I needed to get my degree before I could start working and getting any kind of experience at all. Here was a way out.

I found a company in Fort Lauderdale that was looking for an intern, and I went down and met them. Eric and Mike were the owners – both young guys who had completed their degrees in Construction Management, at the University of Florida, and now ran a successful business. They hired me as a part time estimator.

Hurricane Andrew hit the coast in 1992, and a lot of work came in from Cutler Ridge in South Florida. A roof had come off a huge building, and there was a lot of work to be done. They turned in an estimate to the insurance company for \$2.5 million, and ended up settling on around \$2 million. I was amazed to discover that they netted a million dollars on that one project.

In the meantime, I was basically working for peanuts – at least for a month or two, while I was still taking shifts at the bar on Fridays and over the weekends, and still taking two to three classes in a semester. I worked my ass off, and I had picked up a lot about working with people from my jobs so far – especially tending bar. I was honing my people skills, and learning how to sell myself to people.

My people skills came in handy when I negotiated with my employers.

They offered me a more permanent position after that, but the commute to work was insane. A thirty-minute drive took more than two hours each way because of all the traffic on the Florida turnpike due to all the contractors traveling to rebuild south Florida. But I was picking up a lot of experience in a short time, working for such a small, closely-knit firm. I looked at the experience as a mentorship, and an inspiration.

But reality was creeping up on me. I realized that I was getting older, and it didn't feel like I was getting anywhere. I didn't feel like I was making progress. If you don't feel like you are making progress towards your grandest goals and dreams, it's hard to feel happy and successful. College was dragging on, and even though I was taking my upper level classes, I still doubted myself – wondering if I would ever make it to the finish line.

Deep down I was still afraid that I was too stupid to pass Calculus, and get my degree. I had created a repetitive cycle, and a recurring pattern of negative thinking and behavior around the problem.

I had already dropped the subject three times, and each time I would set my mind to get it done, to finally slay the Calculus monster, I would end up putting it off again. For an hour or two I would work on it, but I was so overwhelmed that I eventually made peace with the fact that I would fail again, or not even show up for the test at all. With those subjects you must learn today's problem solving methods in order to do tomorrow's. I always tried to cram at the last minute, which was impossible and overwhelmed me every time. I would tell myself – next time I'll nail it, but when the time came to study and master the subject, the same pattern would repeat itself.

Those terrible mathematics and physics classes were required – they weren't optional. It makes sense, of course, because in order to be

qualified to build residential houses and commercial or public buildings, you obviously need to know a little about what kinds of weights and stresses your materials can bear, and how to calculate that. But I kept dropping some of those classes. My dad was getting tired of paying for courses that I didn't complete, and it was starting to become a huge problem. It was like an insurmountable obstacle that stood between me and my future success.

I moved out of Roy's place when his dad came back from Europe, and I rented another place from them. It was a two-bedroom apartment, and in most ways I had everything I needed. I had a new car, even though the mileage was adding up, furnished my apartment with all brand-new furniture, I could go on vacation and buy new clothes, I had a little money to spare, but still, I felt like I was going nowhere in life. Calculus was kicking my ass. Hanging over my head was this feeling that I was stuck, that something inside me was holding me back. Most of my friends were already done with college, and well on their way to making a success of life. Here I was, holding myself back. Even though I was making money, I knew I wasn't living up to my full potential. I wasn't on a path that was going to take me to where I truly wanted to be.

In order to sit for the General Contractor's exam I had to have at least five years of experience in a construction company, or four years towards a college degree, plus a year of practical experience managing a building project that was at least three stories high, or more. I had been working for more than two years already, but whichever route I took, it was still going to be a very long time before I could sit for the exam. I was frustrated. It felt like I was never going to succeed. It was really weighing on me. I couldn't figure out what I needed to change, and I didn't know why my life wasn't going the way I wanted it to.

It was like the 'dark night of the soul,' or the point where I felt I had reached rock bottom. Mentally and emotionally I felt drained, and without hope. I was stuck, and could see no way of reaching my

dreams. There were all the problems at home weighing on me, and my dismal outlook for the future, hanging over me like a dark cloud, and I had all but convinced myself that I was too stupid to finish college.

Flipping the Script

“Employ your time in improving yourself by other men’s writing, so that you shall gain easily what others have labored hard for.”

~ Socrates

I was sitting watching TV in the early hours of the morning, feeling more than a little bummed out about all of this, when an infomercial came on. It was an advertisement for a course presented by Tony Robbins – It was called *30 Days to Personal Power*.

Pamela Anderson appeared on the screen, explaining how Tony had helped her overcome self-sabotage in her personal life and in her career. Quincy Jones the famous producer was on there too, adding his endorsement – and a bunch of other successful people too. There was a free trial, and you could choose between tapes or CD’s.

As I watched, I got more and more interested, because it all made a lot of sense to me, and it seemed like this might well be the solution to my problems.

I bought the tapes, which were cheaper than the CD’s, and started the course on the following Monday.

After each tape there was an exercise that you had to complete. At first it was quick and simple to do them, but as the course progressed, it required more and more time. I was determined, and I invested the time because I wanted to find a way out of this rut that I was stuck in.

The big ‘Aha! Moment’ came when I heard Tony Robbins say:

“People will do more to avoid pain than they will do to gain pleasure.”

Looking at my patterns of behavior in college, and life in general, I realized that's exactly what was going wrong. The way I was associating pleasure and pain with the things I had to do was making me act the way that I was acting. This was such an important realization that I want to spend a little time going into it thoroughly, to explain how it all fits together.

I was associating *pleasure* with putting off going to classes, and putting off studying. I was associating *pain* with sitting down and doing Calculus, and that pain was also indirectly associated with potentially discovering that I really was stupid, as my mother had always made me believe. That may have been just her way to try and motivate me, but it was a negative form of reinforcement, which basically was having the opposite effect. I was avoiding that pain.

Every time things became difficult, I would associate it with pain in my mind, and avoid it. Instead of doing work, I did something that I associated with pleasure. Seinfeld or Friends was on TV, or there was always something to do with my friends. I could avoid the painful truth by avoiding the problem. Then, after putting it off for so long, and getting so far behind with the work, there would be such a big mountain to climb that I would always end up failing, or giving up.

I realized how powerful the triggers of pain and pleasure associations were. I saw clearly how the principle was working in my life, and so I slowly started to learn how to flip it around, in order to get what I really wanted out of life.

Perhaps I can add a note here about masculine and feminine energy, and the difference between how to motivate each type. While feminine energy tends to grow through praise, masculine energy grows through *challenge*.

If the sports coach puts you on the bench, because he thinks you're not the best player on the team, you'll want to get into the game to prove your worth.

I felt like that kid on the bench. I wanted to prove the coach wrong – in this case it was my mother. I needed to prove that I was smart enough, and capable enough to succeed, no matter how big the challenge. That was my drive. That was my fuel. I wanted to prove something – I wasn't stupid – I could figure it out. All I had to do was find a technique to actually accomplish it.

At first, when I told my dad what my plan was, he laughed at me in disbelief. He was already fed up with the fact that I was dropping classes so often, and he refused to keep wasting money on it. Fortunately, by then I had enough income of my own to pay for the courses – (they were a little more affordable in those years). So I paid for it myself. I wasn't going to let that, or anything else stop me.

This was a major turning point in my way of thinking. It changed the way I show up in life, and it's a big reason why I am where I am today. It seemed like a monumental task at the time, but I gradually learned to look at it differently.

There's an old saying: How do you eat an elephant? The answer is: One mouthful at a time. I was trying to eat the elephant all at once – which, of course, is unachievable, and that's another reason why I was stuck.

To accomplish big goals that seem impossible, you need to break them down into smaller goals that seem feasible. So what I learned to do was to look at this huge problem in a different way. I needed to break it down into manageable sub-tasks. I needed small, manageable, easy-to-achieve, daily goals.

I went and registered for Calculus class once again, and drew up my battle plans, using my newfound knowledge and the techniques I was learning.

If you're a college student reading this, or if you're listening to the audio version, here's something I learned, from practical life experience that might really help you:

Once you complete your degree, nobody will care where you took some of your classes. When you're just starting out, and you attend some of the first basic classes in University, there might be a few hundred students, and the pompous lecturer will make a point of weeding out as many as possible – they will make it hard for you. It can be really demotivating to face that kind of pressure when you're fresh out of high school. Taking classes at a community college will count towards your required classes needed for attaining a degree (make sure you take community college classes that are transferable to your major university), and frankly, they tend to be a lot easier, require less time and are less expensive than taking classes at a big university. It's a strategy that helped me get through it. Work smarter, not harder.

Even so, it was going to be an extended battle, and so I prepared for it – both psychologically, and in practical ways.

I went out and bought a big desk calendar, and started planning out my life. I had such a lot going on at the time that I needed a schedule – and so I literally planned out every half hour of my week. I would write down the Calculus problems that were due on each day, together with everything else that needed to be done, and in that way I broke it all down into bite size chunks.

It was still a heavy workload, make no mistake about it. I was working at the bar over weekends, plus classes, and then full time 50-hour workweeks at my construction job as a project engineer/estimator, and then still commuting home, sometimes two hours from Miami. By the time I got home to Fort Lauderdale at 10pm the last thing I wanted was to follow my schedule and do homework.

But here's the important thing – and the only way I could manage to get through it: I flipped the script around.

I changed the dialogue I was having with myself in my head. I started intentionally associating pleasure and pain with the right things. I actually wrote down the negative and positive consequences of my actions on a piece of paper, and started training myself to think about this terrible obstacle in a brand new way.

Each time I sat down to work on the next problem, I would remind myself of the painful consequences I was going to experience if I didn't complete those three Calculus problems by the end of that night. I knew very well, from painful experience, that I would fall behind, and start repeating the same destructive cycle all over again.

Even if I successfully completed all the other classes, if I didn't complete Calculus I wouldn't get my degree. That meant I wouldn't get my GC license, so eventually I wouldn't get the car or the house or the girl - or the life I wanted. All of that was going to be *a lot more painful* than doing the problem right in front of me.

I started to spend time contemplating the pain of getting stuck in that negative pattern of behavior. I thought about how I would just have to catch up all the work. I thought about how I would be proving my mother right, and all the other assholes who told me I was too dumb to finish college. I intentionally associated pain with not doing what I was supposed to do. I associated all those ideas with giving up, and with procrastinating. I wrote it all down on a piece of paper.

I also reminded myself of the positive things that would come from knuckling down and getting it done. I deliberately thought about the *pleasure* that would come from finally getting things done. I thought about finally getting my degree, and about proving my worth. I thought about getting my General Contractors license, and getting a job at a better company. I thought about the lifestyle I would enjoy when I became successful. I thought about the car I would own, the house I would buy, or better yet, build myself, and I thought about the women I would attract into my life. I associated those ideas with doing the work. I wrote down each goal, and I wrote down all the

pleasure I would obtain by achieving that goal. I had an emotionally compelling vision for my life. I knew what I wanted and most importantly, why I wanted it. Without emotionally compelling reasons why you want something, you simply will not make the effort or take the required action to make it a reality. This is an essential component of goal setting and goal achievement. You **MUST** know **WHAT** you want and **WHY** you want it.

I later applied the same system to going to the gym, to eating healthier, going to work – anything that needed to be done, any kind of pain that I was subconsciously trying to avoid. In my mind I stopped associating pleasure with avoiding those chores. Instead, I thought about the pain that would eventually come from putting it off.

It's something I've continued to do ever since, and it still serves me well today.

Every time I need to accomplish something new in life, I think about the pain of failing, or procrastinating, or of simply not trying hard enough. I think about the pleasure of succeeding, and getting it done. I think about the awesome things I can experience if it gets done on time, and properly.

It was a fundamental mindset change in the way I thought – and it has affected everything in my life in a positive way since that time.

I finally had a compelling reason to push on and get through the work. There was a reason to stay up until almost midnight, and to keep repeating it, day after day.

Being lazy is a conscious choice. If you choose to be lazy, right now, wherever you are in life, you're going to miss out on a lot of things, a lot of amazing experiences, and fail to get many of the things you want. Using this understanding gives you *leverage on yourself*, and lets you change your habits. It changes the pattern from a negative one to a positive one.

Before I understood this, the leverage was already there – except it was the leverage of pain – the pain I associated with completing Calculus. That leverage was holding me in place, stuck in a life that I didn’t want.

By flipping it around and looking at it from the opposite perspective, I could use the leverage to get what I actually wanted. I thought about the horrible, nasty, unfulfilling, disappointing future I would experience if I continued doing what I had been doing. I was going to miss out on the beautiful gifts of life, and achieving the kind of life I wanted.

“God turns you from one feeling to another and teaches by opposites, so that you will have two wings to fly, not one.”

~ Rumi

Of course, that didn’t magically solve all my problems. I still needed to put in the work – and in fact, there was more to do than I had anticipated.

Professor Barnes, who was the Dean of the School of Construction Management at FIU, warned me that the curriculum had changed. A lot of the classes I had completed no longer counted towards my degree. Even though I’d completed them, and paid for them, they were now worthless. Mechanical and Electrical Equipment for Buildings was one of those classes. It was taught by someone who worked for the building department, and he would get up in front of the class and just read from this text book from the early 1960’s. It was utterly boring, and I’d gotten a B in that class, but it didn’t count. All the changes added a year and a half, and a bunch of extra classes.

It was totally demoralizing, but still, I didn’t give up. I fully accepted that it was my own fault for dropping so many classes in the first place. I had done it to myself, and all by myself. Nobody else was to blame. You must take personal responsibility for your own life. Here’s a powerful quote on self-reliance and personal responsibility

that comes out of a book that Tony Robbins wrote called *Unlimited Power*:

*“Achievers tend to believe that no matter what happens, whether it's good or bad, they created it. If they didn't cause it by their physical actions, maybe they did it by the level and tenor of their thoughts... If you don't believe that you're creating your world, whether it be your successes or your failures, then you're at the mercy of circumstances. Things just happen to you. You're an object, not a subject.” ~
“Unlimited Power” by Tony Robbins, pages 75-76*

That’s how I looked at things in my life, and I was determined to change my behavior in order to become more successful, and to get over the obstacles that were holding me back. I took charge of things, and I decided not to be an object. I was going to shape my destiny through my actions, thoughts, beliefs and goals.

I used my desk calendar to organize the giant tasks into manageable chunks. I was using time management to schedule each and every thing that needed to be done – all those things that I had kept putting off, time and time again. And slowly it started to deliver the results I had hoped for. It was a lot of work – but now my mindset was right, and I had hope, commitment, and a plan of action.

I want to share another important insight that I learned at this time in my life. It’s something that I always share with all my high-achieving clients today – the people who constantly have a lot of balls up in the air at the same time, and who have a lot to do in a day:

Successful people focus on their core competencies in life. That means they do only the things that they’re best at.

The activities that they enjoy and love are what they focus on – the rest they delegate to other people – administrative assistants, freelance contractors, or people that work for them.

To illustrate – let’s say you work in sales, and want to earn more.

One of the first questions you need to ask is: What are the activities that you do, day in and day out, that make the cash register ring? What activities actually make the money come in the door?

Those specific activities are the ones you need to focus on.

You figure out what those are by asking yourself: What is it that I really want to achieve?

Let's say the answer to that is to make half a million dollars – that's the outcome you need. Always think about what your outcome is in anything you do; WHAT do you want to achieve and WHY do you want to achieve it? Start working backwards from there. How many clients do you need to sell in order to achieve that? From there you calculate how many appointments you need to convert to a sale. How many cold-calls are necessary to make the required number of appointments, how many email campaigns or social media campaigns – Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, whatever the case may be in your specific industry, or job. We figure out which are the most important tasks, and then schedule them into a time slot. We block out enough time to make phone calls, follow up on leads, schedule appointments with prospects, or whatever the case may be.

Working backwards from your intended outcome, you start to break down that mammoth task into smaller, more achievable daily ones. You start to organize your time and your resources in order to be able to achieve your goal. You're 'eating the elephant' one bite at a time.

Part of the process with my clients – in fact a very big part of it – is choosing which tasks to outsource, and which ones are core competencies. It's important to schedule your most productive times for those tasks.

If you're going to time-manage your life, and your business, you need to write down your goals, and organize them – rank them in terms of their importance. Your number one goal might be a healthy lifestyle – because without your health you're not going to be able to

achieve as much, or enjoy your life as much as you want to. It affects your energy level and your ability to focus, so that's important. Your second goal might be to become the top salesperson or producer in your company, or to grow your dream business, buy a car – whatever it is. List all of those goals, and number them from one to five – or as many as you feel you really need, in order of importance.

The next step is to match the things you're actually doing every day to that list of goals.

Your to-do list is never ending, and it's always changing – with more and more things being added to it, and others being checked off. We usually don't feel like we're getting ahead on that list, so it's important to know if you're spending a lot of time doing things that take you away from those major goals in your life. Organizing your sock drawer or doing grocery-shopping needs to be done, but it isn't going to help you achieve those major goals.

So what you need to do is to take your to-do list and match it up to your list of major life goals. Go through each item on the list and if it helps you achieve goal number one in the long run, mark it with the number one. Then do the same with goal number two, and then number three, until you've worked through all of them.

Then you can schedule your time to work on the most important things that you need to do first. Anything that is marked with the number one takes priority, anything that's not aligned to your goals is not as important.

When you're working on a task that aligns to your goal, it's important to cut out any distractions that might take you out of the flow of work. Lengthy phone calls, for example, can completely throw you out of your groove, and it will take time to get back into the flow of it again. So cut that out, as far as possible.

“Take time like the river that never grows stale. Keep going and steady. No hurry, no rush.”

~ Rumi

There are practical ways to make this time management work for you, to actually free up segments of time where you can concentrate on achieving those goals. For example, if you’re on the phone a lot, you can create a voice-message that informs callers when you’ll be able to call them back. Mine sounds something like this:

“Hi, my name’s Corey Wayne, I can’t take your call right now, so please leave me a message, and I will call you back between 3 and 4 pm. That’s the time I’ve blocked out to return phone calls and emails, so please be patient.”

And most people will completely understand that kind of thing, whether they’re a client or not.

Then keep reminding yourself of the pleasure you will experience as a result of getting the items on your to-do list done. Keep reminding yourself of the pain you will experience if you allow things to become disorganized, and if you fail to get it done. In your mind, keep associating pleasure with work, and pain with the opposite.

What happens is that as you go through the week, you’re constantly focusing on the most important things that need to get done in order to achieve those goals that you’ve listed. No matter what happens, they get taken care of – they get handled.

If you have a busy life, with lots of things that need to be done all the time, this kind of system is the best way to organize your life. Tasks that rank highly on your list of goals get done first, no matter what. Less important tasks that might take longer, or not get done at all – but you stay focused on what’s most important to you.

The feeling of being successful comes from making progress. By putting this into practice, you become far more efficient. You will manage to get a lot of important things done, because you know they're important, and you've set aside the time to do it. It clears out the clutter and confusion in your head, and by doing so you might even find that you now have some extra time to do things that you never expected to be able to do.

Tony Robbins teaches a course called RPM. Although RPM stands for the Rapid Planning Method, you can also think of it as a Results-oriented/Purpose-driven/Massive Action Plan. If you want to drill down into the method a little more, I can highly recommend it. If you like the experience of a seminar or live event, Tony is the best in the world at what he does. If you can afford the tickets and the travel, it's well worth it to attend something like the UPW course (Unleash the Power Within - Achieve Self Improvement) or DWD (Date with Destiny).

These were the techniques that helped me take on the challenge of finishing college, while still working two jobs, and to finally face my nemesis – Calculus.

I scheduled things, I organized things, and I got my thinking in line. I won't lie to you – it sucked, and it felt like it was just dragging on forever. It was tedious, and it was hard work. But it started paying off, and people noticed.

When my father saw how things were changing for me, he actually offered to help me pay for my courses again – but only for the courses that I completed successfully. Fair enough.

After that low point in my life, where I felt that I just wasn't getting anywhere, as if everything was just too much for me, I reached a major turning point. I had felt stuck, and hopeless. I was convincing myself that I was too stupid to ever finish college. I was proving my

mother right – she had been right all along. I felt worthless, and helpless.

There was something inside me, though, that refused to give up. I wasn't the kind of person who was satisfied with giving up, or with lies and pretense – with talking shit. I've always felt strongly that actions are more important than words – There are two types of people in this world. There are those that decide to take action, and there are people that talk shit. I'm a person of action, and I make things happen. What I had found was a way to manage my actions in an efficient way in order to get what I wanted.

Most people get to their mid-twenties or early thirties, and by that time their dreams are dead. They've given up on them. They've surrendered to the grind of just getting to the end of the week. They survive from Monday to Friday, with maybe just a brief chance to breathe on the weekend, and then get up on Monday and do it all over again. I didn't want to settle for that.

I realized that there was never going to be anybody else that would do it for me. The only person who is responsible for the success or failure in your life is the person you see in the mirror every day. It's not your parents, your brothers or sisters, it's not your teachers, and it's not a politician. Those people don't matter where it comes to your success.

If you're reading this, or listening to this, that means you're that kind of person too. You're not willing to settle for a life of mediocrity. You're not willing to let someone else control your destiny, and I've written this book to show you that it's possible to change your way of looking at things, and by doing so, you can change your life around.

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude.”

~ William James, “The Father of American Psychology”

The first thing I had to do was change my approach. I had to be honest with myself, with my failure to get things done, and I had to find a different way. I had to try something else. If that didn't work I had to keep trying until I found something that worked.

There's a famous story about the inventor, Thomas Edison, whose teachers said he was "too stupid to learn anything." He was fired from his first two jobs for being "non-productive."

As an inventor, Edison made thousands of unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb. Edison's friend and associate Walter S. Mallory later wrote about Edison's attitude, quoting a conversation they had:

"I said: 'Isn't it a shame that with the tremendous amount of work you have done you haven't been able to get any results?' Edison turned on me like a flash, and with a smile replied: 'Results! Why, man, I have gotten lots of results! I know several thousand things that won't work!'"

'Failure' wasn't really failure in Edison's mind. Eventually, of course, he did find the right way – and we all enjoy the results of his success. He didn't see it as failure at all – it was a process of elimination, in order to find success.

The only thing you're lacking is another idea, another approach. Even when you feel you've hit the wall in life and that you've tried everything, all you are really lacking is an idea of what to try next.

It also helps to do something that you love, and to model your ideas on the success of other people. Learn from others in your line of business. Ask them questions, take on an internship, interview people, do whatever it takes to figure out what you're doing wrong and need to be doing differently.

When I worked as an intern, I had little to offer except my time and energy, and my ambition. I was like a sponge – I absorbed all the

knowledge and experience that I could. I loved the industry. I loved building things. I may not have earned all that much as an intern, but it was worth it because of what I learned – the experience I was able to gain.

I've learned something of tremendous value from all these life experiences. What needed to be done was to keep chipping away at the problems that held me back – the things that trapped me in a life that felt wrong.

It was like when Michelangelo was originally creating his famous work of art - the statue of David, which now stands in the Academia Gallery, in Florence, Italy.

Where others saw only a chunk of rock, the great artist and sculptor saw something of incredible beauty. That marvelous form, those muscles and sinews, that posture and all those incredible details were already there – and he had the eyes to see it. All that was needed was to chip away the unnecessary bits of rock that were keeping it trapped. So that's exactly what he did, using nothing but a hammer and a few chisels. He chipped away the excess.

It's the same with anyone's life. It is necessary to consistently and intelligently chip away at the unnecessary bits, and reveal the true magic underneath.

I knew that the life I wanted was amazing. Just as Michelangelo could see David inside the chunk of rock, I could see this awesome life that I wanted – and all that was needed was to keep chipping away, day after day, month after month, year after year, decade after decade. I knew it was up to me, and I was prepared to do the work.

I had a clear vision, and clear focus. I concentrated on looking at that vision of the life I wanted. The alternative was horrible, and painful. Failure wasn't an option. I used that leverage to get through the monotony of the work. I wanted to succeed, more than anything else

—more than wanting to avoid the temporary pain. In my mind, everything that had to be done *was worth it*.

I spent the \$300 on Tony's course, and changed my approach. I bought that calendar and organized my goals into manageable, bite size chunks, and I kept working steadily for a year and a half. That made all the difference, and it changed my life.

After having dropped Calculus three times in the past, I finally conquered it — and after the final exam was over and I got my grade for the class, I got an A! From dropping the class three times to getting the best grade you could get. I can't tell you how awesome that was to experience.

Career Moves, and the Art of Negotiation

“Shallow men believe in luck and circumstances. Strong men believe in cause and effect.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

After finally slaying the Calculus dragon, I got to celebrate the victory, and I got to enjoy all the positive feelings that come from accomplishing something difficult.

It was great to feel like I had proved, to myself most of all, that I wasn't too stupid to do it. It felt like I was making serious progress towards my goals at last.

I kept a piece of paper from that time. It is a list of all the classes I had to complete, and upon which I wrote down the marks I achieved on each class. There were mostly A's and B's on there, but even if I didn't excel at each and every class, the fact is, I was getting somewhere.

What was even better than getting good marks, was finding out that I actually had more free time to go out and enjoy my life for a change. It started to happen that where I had blocked out an hour or more for homework, I was getting it done sooner. Because I was up to date with the work, and because I was doing a little bit of work every single day, it got easier. I would end up having an unexpected hour or two to spare to go out and do whatever I felt like doing – with a clear conscience.

It's one of the greatest positive spin-offs that come from organizing your priorities, and organizing your life. Using proper time management, together with the strategy of cutting those huge goals into manageable chunks was starting to really pay off. I was now able to spend time going out with my friends, or whatever I felt like doing, without the heavy cloud of guilt hanging over me.

Before I got organized, I would have to miss all of those opportunities, because I was always 'cramming for an exam.' In reality, most of the time I was simply finding ways to avoid the work. By adopting a new mindset, and a new way of doing things, I was getting the work out of the way, steadily and consistently.

The momentum started to build up in my life, and I started accomplishing a lot more. I still had the same amount of time available as everyone else, and the same resources I had before, but the results were changing. One of my favorite quotes from Dr. Wayne Dyer fits the situation perfectly:

*“When you change the way you look at things,
the things you look at change.”*

Miami

The contractor I was working for down in Miami was completing a number of the projects that we had been working on all this time. After that, a lot of new work came in for renovating old buildings.

In South Beach there were a lot of buildings which had been built in the 1920's and 1930's. Quite a few of those buildings were interesting, from a design point of view, but they were falling apart, mainly because of the materials that were used to build with in those years.

Building specifications at the time of their construction weren't what they are today. Back in those years, they used to take beach sand and mix it with Portland cement and water, rock and different aggregates to make concrete. They also used square steel rods as rebar, to reinforce the concrete, which are very different to the circular, grooved reinforcement rebar we use today. Concrete is very strong in terms of compressive strength, but quite weak in tensile strength. The salt in the beach sand eventually starts corroding and expanding the steel. That means that sooner or later a building's columns, beams and supporting walls start falling apart. The foundations and basic structure needed to be repaired, and as contractors, we had to make sure the buildings were structurally sound and fit to be occupied again.

The old art-deco buildings in South Beach were going through something of a renaissance, back in the late 1980's to early 1990's. Developers were fixing up some of those buildings and turning them into businesses, homes, or condo complexes. A lot of people were moving down there, and as a result the property market was healthy. It was a constant source of new business for us.

We had a lot of work that consisted of doing gunite structural repairs on those old buildings. We first chipped out the disintegrating

concrete, then reinforced the steel properly, and finally sprayed gunite into place. If you've ever seen a swimming pool being built, you might have seen this kind of concrete. A thick, sticky mixture is shot into place, and then troweled. Once it hardens, it restores the strength of the beam or column, or the wall that's being repaired.

There were old hotels in the area that had become structurally unsound, and were all boarded up. Developers would pick them up for a song, then renovate them, and sell them off as units – it's called a 'condo conversion' in the industry.

The foundations needed to be pressure-grouted. That meant injecting fluid material under pressure into fractures and cavities in the ground. We had to basically lift the building up and level it off again because it had settled over the decades. We would fix all the columns and structural supports, and then add a second or third floor, and turn those old dilapidated apartment buildings and hotels into brand new condos to sell.

It was valuable experience for me. As the projects came in, I got to see many of the inner workings of the construction business, and some of the finer points of financing, and came to understand many of the technicalities involved.

Unfortunately the commute to work was killing me.

I lived in Fort Lauderdale, and even 25 years ago, before they widened the road, the traffic on the I-95 Interstate was horrendous. I hated driving down to Miami because of that. It felt like I was wasting so much of my valuable time. If you add up all those hours spent on the road, it's insane how much of your life is basically wasted.

The company I was working for was quite small, which is both a good and a bad thing. I had quite a lot of responsibility, but we didn't get to bid on the really big jobs. Besides that, the owners were constantly bickering.

Although I was enjoying the experience of working there, and earning the kind of money I needed, I was already looking towards the future.

By now, the way that I was thinking about everything in my life had changed, on a fundamental level, so everything in my life was beginning to change as a result.

It's amazing that a change in attitude will start to invite completely new circumstances into your life. You will find yourself becoming dissatisfied with the same old routine – one that isn't actually working for you anymore – and naturally you will start finding ways to change it. If you go along with the process, it's as if the universe stops fighting you, and starts helping you.

I was dreaming of potentially getting into property development work on my own, but I knew there were a few stepping stones along the way to get there. My eventual goal was to get into developing single-family home communities, commercial projects or building condominiums – but in the meantime, it would be great to land a job closer to home, and to work somewhere with the right kind of company culture.

So I realized that I needed to find out everything there was to know about how to land the perfect job to explore doing bigger projects and being a developer because I was starting to become bored and no longer challenged working for the Contractor in Miami.

Building on the confidence from my success at college, and on the set of new skills I was picking up, I knew I would successfully overcome this new challenge too.

The Art of Negotiation

“The garden of the world has no limit except in your mind.”

~ Rumi

If you want to land the perfect job, whether you’re unemployed right now, or just wanting to change jobs, or even thinking of becoming an entrepreneur, you might find a lot of value from what I learned while going through this process.

The first step was to educate myself on the art of negotiation.

I picked up a lot of tricks that would help master this delicate process from reading Dale Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Even though it’s an old book, first published way back in 1930, it has sold more than 30 million copies, and it’s still a respected classic on marketing, business relationships, rapport building and the art of negotiation. It has helped a lot of people to become more successful in life. I highly recommend reading it.

I also learned a lot about deal making and negotiation from Donald J. Trump’s books, *“The Art Of The Deal”* and *“The Art Of The Comeback.”*

What especially helped me to succeed, in this instance, was coming to understand that during any negotiation there will always be just one person leading the conversation. Usually, that’s the person asking all the questions.

Even if you feel you’re at a disadvantage in the bargaining process, you can flip things around in subtle ways to make yourself seem like a more attractive prospect to any would-be employer.

First, you need to clearly understand your relative worth, and then you need to know how to position yourself in such a way that you stand the best possible chance of landing the best possible job, with the highest pay.

To illustrate the point: Think of the choices facing a professional athlete during the different phases of his career.

A rookie player, just out of college, will want to get drafted by a team, and likely, almost any team will do. His goal is simply to get into the game somehow. A rookie still needs to prove his worth. If a talent scout from a big team offers any kind of opportunity, there's going to be a certain kind of discussion that will take place.

After four or five years, things will change for the player, depending on how he performs, and then a new negotiation will take place. As a player develops and proves himself over time, his relative value increases. That means that his bargaining and leverage position changes significantly.

A superstar like LeBron James, or Michael Jordan, or Tom Brady will obviously be having a totally different kind of conversation during an interview. In the top tiers of the sport it might even happen that a billionaire team owner hops on a private jet, and comes in person to make a lucrative offer. The dynamics of the negotiation will obviously be very different to the one had by a rookie – but the principles remain the same.

Because a superstar player like LeBron James is in such high demand, he can pick from any number of teams to play for. Making that career decision, for a superstar, will come down to researching the details about what the team has to offer. The decision will be based on a number of factors – he will need to collect all the data, and then weigh up all the alternatives.

For someone in the top league, making the right choice will involve more than just the paycheck, at the end of the day. A superstar player

will want to know what the team culture is, what kind of people are running the organization, who the coach is, if the team is good enough to compete for championships, what perks are on the offer, how it will benefit his pro career, personal brand and how it affects his family. He will be able to choose the best team that he can, and will approach the negotiation with that kind of mindset.

If you're looking for a job, you need to think about how you're going to approach the negotiation. Are you a rookie, or a superstar?

Perhaps you're not a superstar employee, at least not yet, and so you can't realistically expect that kind of salary. However, you can still position yourself on the winning end of the negotiation. You need to *think and behave like a superstar* to get the most out of the negotiation. You need to adopt that kind of attitude, that kind of confidence, and that kind of mindset.

Whether you're an employee or an entrepreneur, your purpose at work is to add *value*. You're either contributing value through a product or providing a service – this is what makes you worth employing. In order to reach your maximum earning potential, you need to make smart choices – ones that align to your natural talents, and your goals in life. You need to add as much value as you can.

Just like the professional athlete, during your career trajectory you should always be looking for opportunities to grow, and develop your gifts, skills and talents. You have to develop your acquired skills in line with your natural talents. That also means that you want to work for someone who provides you with the right kind of opportunities to develop.

Almost everybody spends a considerable time at work – a big portion of your life is taken up by that one occupation. If you're stuck in a job that you hate, and you don't do anything to change the fact, it starts to poison your whole life with negativity, and as a result, your health begins to suffer.

Your body is a reflection of the thoughts that you nurture. The opinions that you cultivate about yourself, your sense of self-worth and self-respect, are all expressed by your body. Unhealthy thoughts go hand-in-hand with illness. Healthy thoughts tend to create health in your body too.

When you're in a negative state of mind, because you hate your job every day, you're also going to be less inclined to look after yourself. You won't make such an effort to get the proper nutrition, or the right exercise. It's a downward spiral. Negativity and poor health feed off each other. Eventually you could lose all sense of hope, start to question your own worth, and start to feel there's no point in even trying. Why bother going to the gym? You'd rather opt for the Big Mac, and the candy bar, because it's easier, and you just don't care.

It's important to deliberately cultivate an attitude of success, and weed out a mindset based on fear, negativity, or desperation. Your attitude is your most important weapon during any kind of negotiation.

If you think like a superstar, like a 'LeBron James' instead of thinking like a rookie, you're going to approach the whole process differently.

It's essential to cultivate the mindset of a winner – to adopt the mind of a superstar employee or entrepreneur. Instead of giving up hope on ever getting a good job, you need to act instead as if you have plenty of options. Instead of calling and begging for a job, instead of meekly asking for them to give you the time or the opportunity, you need to take a completely different approach.

Even if you've been unemployed for a while, you still want to make it seem as if you have plenty of other options available to you. Even if you don't have as much experience as you would like, you need to present yourself in the right way, so that a prospective employer thinks you're going to be an asset to his company.

When making that phone call, you need to introduce yourself in a way that creates the right kind of first impression. You need to let that potential employer know that you're not just looking for any old job. You need to make them understand that you want a company with the right culture, and a company with a future – and by asking questions about their company, you put yourself on the stronger end of the negotiation.

It also helps to differentiate yourself from the competition. To borrow a phrase from the marketing guru, Seth Godin, you need to be like a *purple cow* – in other words, one that stands out from the herd.

An acquaintance of mine inspired me with the way she went about doing just that. She majored in marketing, and loved wine. Her dream job was working for the wine estates, marketing their wines for them. The way she went about getting her dream job was unique and inspiring.

First she would enjoy a bottle of wine from one of her favorite estates. Then she would take the empty wine bottle, with the label intact, clean it, and then roll up her resume and insert it inside the bottle. She cleverly attached it to the cork so it was easy to get out again. Then she would call ahead to find out who to send it to, box up the bottle and ship it off to the wine estate.

I thought it was a really clever way to get noticed. Employers have lots of people approaching them for work, so you've got to do something extraordinary to make yourself stand out from the herd. Her method worked, and a lot of the estates called her back, even if they didn't have an opening for her right away – they let her know that they would gladly hire her if a position opened up in the future. She made the right kind of impression on the right people. Nobody else had ever done something like that, and potential employers respected her effort, her creativity, and her enthusiasm. Her marketing degree was necessary, but it was secondary.

I was impressed too. I'm someone who is always interested in upping my game, getting an edge, in finding better ways to do things, and this inspired me to take the first steps towards finding a contractor to work for closer to home.

Another friend of mine majored in television and film at the University of Alabama. He was working a bullshit job in collections that he hated, and wanted to find a good job in his line of study. We found some film tins that were used to hold old movie reels, and glued his resume to the insides of them. Then we sent them off to a lot of different production companies in Orlando. Several of them called him as soon as they received them to tell him how impressed they were.

If you're sending your resume to companies, this is a great strategy to make you stand out in the pile of applications.

I made a list of 40 to 50 different general contractors, and set to work. I ranked those companies in order of the ones I wanted to work for most.

Then, inspired by my friend's idea, I went out and bought a hard cardboard tube, the kind used to hold blueprints when architects send them to contractors. I contacted the companies on my list, spoke to the receptionists, and found out who would be the best person to send my resume to.

In smaller companies it was usually the owner, in bigger firms it was either a VP or a Human Resources person. I put my resumes in the blueprint tubes, and shipped them off. I used FedEx, so I knew when it would be delivered, and exactly when I could make a call to follow up. I knew that the person receiving the tube would think it was a blueprint – maybe a project to quote on – and I knew it would create the right impression, and set me apart from my competition. In a stack of 50 resumes, emails, and boring cover letters, mine would stand out.

I knew I had to hustle, and I knew that this was a great way to show that I was hungry.

My strategy didn't end there. I persistently kept following up, writing down the names of the receptionists, and the decision-makers, and even the names of their children, if it came up. I would ask them how often they would like me to check back – just in case an opening became available.

Looking for a job can be demoralizing, especially when one door after the next keeps closing in your face. That's why it's so vital to persevere, and to keep your hopes up.

Always remember: People get fired, people get promoted, companies grow, people move away – there's a lot that can happen, and so even if they don't have an opening right away, that doesn't mean one might not open in the near future. It's just a matter of time.

Following the right kind of strategy shows that you're hungry, and motivated – and tenacious. Most of your competition won't take the trouble to do that. As soon as an opening becomes available, the company might call you, or if you're following up every six weeks, you might just find an open door.

Think of it from the employer's point of view.

An entrepreneur or business owner wants to hire somebody who is low-maintenance, and eager to work. They're looking for superstar employees, people that will work hard, and deliver for them. By continuously following up, and by making a point of remembering their names, you're showing that you have the right frame of mind. You're demonstrating your tenacity and resourcefulness. It's just a matter of time before someone notices, and gives you a chance to prove yourself.

I knew that I needed to adopt just the right mindset when I called those companies, and started talking to potential employers. Straight

off the bat I spoke with confidence, and I asked a lot of questions. I never once begged or apologized.

I behaved as if I had lots of opportunities. In my mind I was a superstar, checking to see if their team was worth playing for, because I knew that whoever was asking all the questions was in control of the conversation.

When a receptionist picked up the phone, and I explained what the purpose of my call was, I would say something like:

“I’m considering moving to another company, because the company culture kind of sucks where I’m employed right now. I have a couple of opportunities, but I’m looking for a really great company to work for. I’m looking for *the right* opportunity. I’d like to ask you a few questions if I may.”

I would ask a lot of questions such as:

“How long have you been working there?”

“Do you like working there?”

“What are the owners like?”

“What are the managers like? How do they treat the employees?”

“What is the company culture like? Is the company growing? Is it stable? Are there a lot of opportunities for advancement?”

I asked those questions deliberately. It was a big part of my strategy. I knew that instead of trying to talk them into giving me a shot at working there, they would end up trying to sell their company to me. People naturally want to feel good about the fact that they work where they do, and owners of companies, especially, like to feel that their company is the best.

The only kind of person who is going to ask a lot of questions in any negotiation is a superstar, like a ‘LeBron James’. Someone who has

plenty of options, and someone who can pick and choose among the best of them, is going to be the master of his own life, and call the shots in terms of his future prospects. It's a subtle psychological pressure point, and it's a very powerful technique.

When I got to speak to the VP or the decision-maker, the same rule applied. Instead of trying to convince him to give me an opportunity, I focused on getting him to talk about himself, and his company.

Adopting a positive attitude, and showing genuine interest in the person you're conversing with will deliver far better results than begging or demanding. It creates a rapport with another human being, and that sets the foundation for any kind of relationship.

This is one of the most important insights I got from Dale Carnegie's book. Carnegie studied the richest and most successful men of his time, and figured out their strategies, which he then shared in his book. Successful people tend to know how to get what they want from other people – and it comes down to knowing which buttons to push, and how to draw out a positive response.

Successful people know the truth: We all love to talk about ourselves. We all put our own interests first, and we don't like to be criticized. In Carnegie's course he explains how you can use that knowledge to your benefit. Understanding the way people think is a great advantage to any negotiator.

“There is only one way to avoid criticism: Do nothing, say nothing and be nothing.”

~ Aristotle

When you're negotiating with someone, you need to get them to talk about themselves, about their company, and about what they want. You need to show them how you can give them what they want – it's

not only about what *you* want, or what *you* demand. When they feel like they're talking to a friend, not somebody who is begging for a job, it's a very different kind of conversation. Instead of a war, it's cooperation.

Superstar employees communicate differently than the rookies who are begging for a job. Superstars are skeptical, in the sense that they don't simply settle for the first or easiest option. They know their worth. They want to know what things are like at a company before they're willing to send over their resume or come in for an interview.

So that's exactly the strategy I followed. When I got to speak to the VP or the person that was doing the hiring, I would position myself like a superstar employee. After leading the conversation, and getting them to tell me all about their company for five minutes I would say something like:

"Great. It sounds like your company *might* be what I'm looking for. When is a good time for us to get together to discuss the details? What's your schedule like?"

There was never any hint of doubt or uncertainty on my part. I didn't ask whether or not we could meet – I asked *when* we could meet. It's the kind of question that requires someone to give you a definite answer. It's not vague, and it's not open-ended.

I talk about the same principle in my first book, because it applies equally well to asking a woman out on a date, and in many other aspects of life too. The confident person, the one who is asking all the questions and leading the conversation is the one who is in charge of the negotiation.

During the negotiation you're not focused on the salary expectations. That's one of the last things you get to, and when you do, it's very important to approach it in the right way too.

Many times an employer will ask what you're earning at the moment. They will try to get the upper hand, and get the opportunity to make the lowest possible offer.

The way I would answer this kind of question was by asking another question. Remember, in the back of the employer's mind, there are three or four other companies that I'm considering working for. I would always reply with a question like:

“What is your best offer?”

“What is your budget looking like? What can your company afford to pay right now?”

“Let me know what you're willing to offer, and I'll compare that to what I've been offered elsewhere, by two other companies, who're offering me more or less what I want, and I will get back to you within 24 hours.”

I would always insist on a salary review after 90 days, six months and a year. I was never antagonistic, but instead I showed that I was eager to work and to prove myself. Everything I said was infused with that same positive attitude. I never directly declined their offer, I was merely telling them what I expected, and what I wanted to earn.

It shows confidence, and it shows that you value yourself, and believe in yourself. In essence, the right kind of message, the idea that you should always be carrying across is something like:

“I will be busting my ass and doing a great job for you, so I want to be sure that I'm taking the right offer for me, and for my family.”

If you approach the negotiation in this way, you might be surprised at the outcome. You could even end up getting more than what you were hoping to get at the start.

While we're on the subject of salary, here's another important detail: If you're looking to be employed by a startup, it's usually a good idea

to ask for shares in the company, right from the beginning of the negotiation.

One of my best friends is a living testament to the wisdom of this.

He left AOL with \$40 million because he insisted on getting shares in the business, back when it was starting out, and in the early stages of negotiation. When the company wanted to employ him, he flatly refused to work there unless he got shares.

Years later, when the company eventually went public, and merged with Time Warner in the late 1990's, he was able to cash out in a big way. These days he lives on the beach, like I do, and records his music, trades his stocks, and he has basically been retired for two decades. He is one of my dearest friends, and a role model for many aspects of my success in later years. If you're thinking of joining a startup, take heed of this piece of advice.

No matter what kind of a job you're aiming for, it's vital to approach the negotiation from a position of power. Even if you're not in the strongest position to bargain, you can still employ what you know about the psychology of negotiation to create the impression that you are.

Psychologically speaking, you want to utilize the idea of scarcity – make it seem as if you're a rare commodity, of exceptional value.

Scarcity creates value. If the person doing the hiring feels that you're in demand, and feels that other companies might snatch you up before he gets the chance, it's going to play on his subconscious mind. It has the same emotional and psychological effect as a 'limited time offer' that you see used in many advertisements.

Much of that comes down to how you speak, and how you ask questions. You need to set the tone with confidence. Even if you don't have all the perfect credentials on paper, if you have the right kind of attitude, you're worth more.

As an entrepreneur, I've hired and fired hundreds of people in my career. The ones that always work out are the ones that are self-starters, and self-motivated. They are the ones that are always in your face. They believe in themselves, and they're eager to prove it to their employers. They know how to make you feel at ease.

Taking this kind of approach is what helped me to get the job that I wanted, back then, and it has worked for me and my clients ever since.

At one of the companies that I followed up on, the Office Manager answered the phone. She immediately clicked with me, and we struck up a lively conversation. There was a rapport between us – I felt like I had known her all my life. As it later turned out, our birthdays were only a couple of days apart.

I asked a lot of questions about the company, as I've explained, and as she was describing the business, I started to get a good feeling about working there.

They were developers based in Fort Lauderdale, doing condos and single family homes; they were a young and growing company. The owner had taken over from his father, who was a small-time operator, and had consistently grown it into a thriving business since then.

By the end of our conversation, I had won her over to my side. She told the owner of the business that he really needed to speak to me. She put him on the line, and once I again I started asking a lot of questions about their company. I didn't know much about the company, although I'd seen their name around.

As expected, when I asked the right kind of questions, the owner started to try to convince me that it was a great company to work for. Even though it was twenty-five years ago, I remember that conversation as if it was yesterday. By the end of the conversation, I confidently replied:

“Well, great, when are you free so I can come in and talk about the details?”

Although I lacked experience in construction, my preparation for this moment had made me a better negotiator. I was only 23 years old, but it felt as if I was running the conversation.

The doors started opening for me because I had taken the right approach to finding a job. I was no longer merely a victim of circumstances; I was gradually becoming the master of my own future, and learning to become the master of myself.

I ended up getting a much better offer than I had hoped for.

You don't get what you deserve in life; you only get what you negotiate.

Fort Lauderdale

The Office Manager and I became good friends, and we've been friends ever since. She eventually came to work for me, as my executive assistant in my life coaching business, and still works for me today. It sometimes happens that you meet someone, and instantly feel like you've known them for years. It was a total spiritual connection, as if the universe had pre-arranged it. She's one of my closest, trusted friends, and a key person to my business too.

I've learned to trust those moments of synchronicity – when things just feel right. It usually leads to a positive outcome.

Because I had sent away so many copies of my resume, and taken such a confident, pro-active approach, I had lots of options to choose from. A number of companies were interested in hiring me.

Most of the managers in the firm had worked for Centex Construction Group at some point – the largest construction firm in the world during the 1990's. They had worked on big multi-million dollar projects. The medium sized company that now wanted to hire me, was doing exactly the kind of building development I was interested in. I wanted to know what went in to developing 300 single-family home communities, or building 30 or 40 high-end luxury condos – I saw myself getting into that line of business one day.

In the early 1990's computers were just starting to become an essential part of the building industry – estimating and using excel spreadsheets was still something quite new. I wanted to be on the leading edge of that, and wanted to work for a company that embraced the future. One of the companies that got back to me had bought a couple of computers years ago, but couldn't figure them out, so they threw them in the closet. Although it was a good

company, they didn't have a company culture that was open to changes, or new technology, and that was an immediate red flag.

If you're in the process of changing jobs, it's important to keep your options open, and not to burn your bridges. You should make sure you have something in line before you resign from your steady job, no matter how painful that may be.

I still had my construction job down in Miami, and in the very worst case, I still had my bartending job. I really wanted to just up and quit, but the construction industry is close-knit, and word gets around, so I gave them two weeks' notice when I resigned.

I worked for the new company for a year and a half, and finally graduated from Florida International University (FIU) with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Construction Management, in 1995. Because of my early delays, and all the classes I had to retake, it had taken me a full seven years to complete a four-year degree.

The great thing about studying there was that most of the professors weren't just academics – they came from the construction industry, and had actual working experience. Besides that, it was a good way to make connections and network in the industry. The professor that taught Construction Management Scheduling, using Prima Vera project planning software, had strong connections with Centex Rooney. He was the scheduling manager there. I approached him and explained that I wanted to work on massive projects like the resorts they were doing for Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida.

I loved that city, and dreamed of living there. I'd been up there a few times with a friend from High School, and just fell in love with the place. I loved the vibe of the Disney area, and my heart was calling me in that direction.

Orlando

In the construction industry, it's as if you're always working yourself out of a job.

You're constantly estimating and bidding for new jobs, and the entire team works hard to complete the actual construction, but before it's finished, you're already bidding on the next project, trying to line up the next work. I was spending far too much time doing that, and as a result, my internal enthusiasm was flagging.

I was getting frustrated sitting behind the desk, bidding all day long. I had learned everything I could learn from them, and done everything I could do with them – and still had big ambitions to keep moving forward. I wanted to be involved in building large construction projects, instead of the small and medium size projects that I was doing every day. I was bored and no longer felt challenged anymore.

Meanwhile the construction industry was starting to go into a general slump, and the amount of work coming in was declining. I was starting to get up in the mornings and dreading going to work.

What I really hoped to do was to work on a Disney project. The Walt Disney World development company that built their resorts was called, Disney Development Company (DDC), which later became Disney Imagineering.

Disney uses only the best building materials, from all over the world. Centex Rooney, a large-scale construction company subsidiary of Centex Construction Group, was very involved, and built probably around 95% of the resorts on Disney property, including the Tower of Terror.

There was a huge project in the pipeline at the time called the Coronado Springs Resort. It was to have a luxurious Spanish Colonial Mexican theme, with 2,000 rooms and a huge 300,000

square foot convention center. It was situated on 150 acres, with man-made lakes, and was going to be the jewel of Disney's resorts.

If I could find a way to be involved with a project like that, it would be the perfect capstone for my resume and construction experience, and launch me into the construction big leagues – I could write my own ticket from there.

So that was my next challenge, and I was determined to keep the momentum of success going. I already knew how to do it, so it was simply a matter of finding the right people to talk to.

Fortunately, I already knew a lot of people who worked for Centex Rooney. I knew the Scheduling Manager – who was my professor, and because he also consulted for the company I worked at, he knew my work. My marketing professor at FIU also worked there, as their marketing manager. I was also classmates and friends with the CEO's son, who I used to party with from time to time.

I spoke to all of them and lined up an interview, as well as interviews with two other companies in Orlando, using the same strategies I used to get my previous job.

One of the final hurdles was an interview with Mike Wood, who was a Senior Vice President in charge of all Central Florida work for Centex Rooney. He was a true 'good old boy,' a man who embodied the unsophisticated good fellowship and boisterous sociability of the South. He spoke with a southern accent, and was very highly respected in the industry. More importantly, he was an old hand at negotiation, unlike some of the people I had dealt with before.

To be honest, he saw me coming from a mile off.

When I told him that I was going for interviews with other companies, he must have known what I was up to. He could tell that I really wanted to be involved in the big projects that his company had

secured. He had me at a disadvantage, and he knew it, so during our conversation when he offered me a job, he said to me:

“I don’t want you to come work for me with a bad taste in your mouth...” and he offered me \$5,000 a year less than I was earning back in Fort Lauderdale.

I knew that the cost of living was cheaper in Orlando, but that didn’t make it any easier. I told him that his offer was less than I was getting at the moment, and then there was a moment of dead silence...

When you’re in a negotiation, and somebody gives you an offer, the best thing you can do is say nothing. He who speaks first loses the negotiation. But this wasn’t Mike’s first negotiation, and he knew this, so he waited me out.

After a few moments I spoke first.

“Well, the cost of living is cheaper up there... And I really want to work for your company.”

Of course I had lost the negotiation in terms of the salary I was getting, but in my mind it was still worth it. I really wanted to work for his company, so although I was going to be earning a bit less, I was still going in the right direction. It was the next step in the evolution of my career, and so I was willing to accept.

I ended up learning a lot from Mike over the next year of working for him.

Over the years I gained much more experience in the art of negotiation. I learned more of the subtleties, and I also learned a few more tricks. During one property negotiation in 1997, for example, I learned that sometimes you have to call your opponent’s bluff.

A woman and her father walked into the title company’s office, at the final stage of signing and closing a deal on a house they wanted to

buy from me that I had fixed-up and renovated to like-new condition. Up until that point she had been happy and excited about the deal, and all we needed to do was sign the closing documents.

When she walked through the door she had a scowl on her face, and I knew something was up. She started complaining about an abandoned car next to the property. Someone had stolen it, and put it up on cinder blocks, and taken the rims off. She showed me a photograph she had taken. The house wasn't situated in the best neighborhood, and I knew that the buyer worked for the prison system. She also demanded that I fix the fence, and wanted a couple of thousand dollars off the agreed price. She was threatening to walk away from the deal, after having shown so much initial interest.

I explained that I couldn't simply write her a check for what she wanted, and that changing the agreed numbers had ramifications in terms of contracts, and loan approval procedures.

Feeling bummed about it I called the loan officer, and as we talked over the phone, and I explained the client's wishes, she confirmed my suspicions.

"Corey." The loan officer said, "She's playing you. It's simply a negotiation tactic. She wouldn't have gone through the whole process unless she was serious about it. She's really happy to have the home, and to move her father in. She was just talking about it this morning."

I smiled as I put down the phone. It was time to call her bluff. I agreed to fix the fence, but explained that it was impossible to change the selling price at this late stage.

She got up and walked out of the office, and the Title officer looked at me with big eyes. I just sat there for two or three minutes, and she walked back into the office, smiling, and saying:

"Alright, it's settled, we'll do the deal."

Sometimes you just have to call someone's bluff. The strongest position in a negotiation means you're willing to walk away from the table and mean it, and if you're experienced, you'll know when someone is really willing to do that.

The whole reason I got into construction was to learn how to build. My long-term career goals were still to learn to buy, fix and sell single-family homes.

My jobs in Miami and Fort Lauderdale had given me exposure to the construction and development industry. I had already come to understand that there were some big risks involved.

Besides the cost of buying a piece of property, it was necessary to outlay a ton of money in architectural fees, attorney fees, job site offices, and getting the property rezoned. After laying out all that money, there was still no guarantee that you would pre-sell at least 50% of the units to secure a construction loan.

That's exactly what happened to my employer, Tony. After spending all that money, he wasn't able to pre-sell enough units to start building. When he ran out of time, he had to hand back the property to the owner, and ended up suffering huge losses. While I was getting paid to work there, I was also getting a valuable education about this line of business, and I was able to scratch it off my list of possible career paths to pursue.

At that time I had been dating my girlfriend for about two years. This was the first long-term relationship I had been in, and she was a really awesome woman who loved me for who I was, and she was really important to me too.

When I told her I had been offered the job, and wanted to move to Orlando, she said that she would only move up there with me if we got engaged first.

Deep down inside it didn't really feel right. I wasn't quite ready to get married, but at the same time I didn't want to lose her.

I actually discuss this episode of my life at length in my first book, so I'm just going to summarize the entire thing by saying that I didn't truly listen to my heart. I talked to a lot of people about it, and listened to all of their advice. What I failed to do was listen to that little voice inside, telling me what to do.

What I should have said was:

"I'm not ready to get married yet, and I will understand if you don't want to come with me, and even though I love you, my career is important to me too."

Of course, in life, we don't always do exactly what we're supposed to do. We can only move from one stepping stone to the next, and try to keep moving forwards.

The Stepping Stones to Success

“Faith is to believe what you do not yet see; the reward for this faith is to see what you believe.”

~ Saint Augustine

I didn't listen to that little voice, but instead made up my mind to get engaged. At least I was following my heart professionally to move to Orlando.

Not long after that I went to dinner with my girlfriend's parents, and took the opportunity to ask her father's permission to marry her. I had planned to officially propose to my girlfriend a little later on, but the news was blurted out when we got back to their place, and it just so happened that I had the ring on me.

Before I knew what was happening, I was down on one knee, holding the engagement ring, while the whole thing was being captured on camera by her parents.

We were caught up in the whirlwind of the moment.

It wasn't long before we moved to Orlando, and put down a deposit on a house that we were planning to build. We set a wedding date, and the construction of our first home was scheduled to be finished two weeks before we got married.

I went to work for Centex Rooney in 1995, and as I had hoped, I got to work on the Coronado Springs project for Disney. At the time, this two year project carried a budget of \$170 million. I was in the big leagues of the construction industry, just as I had hoped.

I was employed as part of a team of around 12 project engineers. My job was to ensure that our sub-contractors manned their jobs correctly, and delivered what they were supposed to, at the proper time. I checked that materials got properly approved, that shop drawings were done on time, and that materials got delivered to the job site as they needed to. As project engineers, we basically managed the project, solved problems that the construction superintendents and workers encountered in the field and coordinated the work.

We had our site offices next to the Disney Imagineering offices, so we would have to go over there quite often to solve any construction issues. If there was any confusion or problem with the architectural drawings, or questions about any specifications, we could resolve them directly on site. We would get new drawings or designs done within hours on the Computer Assisted Design (CAD) system the Architects and Engineers used. If the construction team had a problem in the morning, we could have it resolved by the same afternoon. We would have to ensure that the costing was calculated appropriately, and get all the needed approvals through the system in a hurry. That meant creating a Request for Change Order (RCO), or a Request For Information (RFI), pricing it out, getting bids from subcontractors for materials and work, and then following up that it was carried out properly.

Before we mobilized onsite because it was still being prepared by Disney's site contractor, we were situated behind the scenes on the Disney property, in the bowels of the park, those parts that most people don't get to see when they visit the theme parks in a small temporary office of three double-wide trailers. We had a 10,000 square foot office complex consisting of 10 double-wide trailers once on site.

I worked with some of the sharpest and most experienced people in the industry. Mike Wood, who had interviewed me originally, was in

charge of the Disney operations, and he was a great leader and mentor.

It was very different from my work at the smaller companies I'd worked for before. It involved plenty of meetings, coordination, and administration, but fortunately there was a practical side to it too, which I enjoyed.

I had to make sure that what was intended on paper, in the designs and plans, actually translated into physical reality. I had to ensure that the materials delivered to the site actually worked in the field, that before concrete was poured, all penetrations in the slabs, footings and walls were exactly where they were supposed to be, and that everything was done according to specification. It required the utmost attention to detail.

Although I was responsible for around \$30 million of the project's overall scope, and looking after a complex section of the project, I actually had less responsibility than I did working for the smaller companies.

Much of my time was spent in meetings, and simply trying to get people to do what they were supposed to do. The subcontractors were quick to make promises, but not very good at keeping those promises. As it turns out, a lot of people in the construction industry make a habit of lying through their teeth. Keeping strictly to the project timelines, and staying strictly within budget was a big challenge.

Much of the time it seemed to me that I was simply sitting in meetings, babysitting people who were much older than me. They would often lie about having the proper drawings or materials ready on time, and so my job was to keep following up, and keep the pressure on to make sure the project ran smoothly.

Sometimes we would even need to hop on a plane to visit a subcontractor's factory site to make sure they were on track, and

verify it with our own eyes. We would tour the factory and make sure everything was proceeding according to plan. A delay would be catastrophic for the project as a whole – and cost a lot of money. In a project as big as this, the liquidated damages alone could put a company out of business.

Disney was building over 2000 rooms, and they had plenty of staff members on the payroll. They were investing a lot of money into the expansion, and already advertising and planning to have visitors in those rooms. The bookings were set for dates very soon after the scheduled project completion date. Delays would mean a huge loss of revenue. There was no way we could fall behind, so the pressure was on.

The Boardwalk project, which had recently been completed a mile down the road from us, had been a disaster. Three months before the intended completion date they were still six months behind schedule. In order to finish on time the huge team had to work 24 hours a day. Three eight-hour shifts worked back to back, and the additional costs incurred were horrendous. It was a lesson for us in what the consequences would be if our project was managed badly. None of the contractors had priced in the additional work, so you can imagine the sums of money involved. At the end of that disaster there were lawsuits that ran up tens of millions of dollars against the General Contractor.

One of the biggest problems with the Boardwalk project was the fact that they failed to get the kitchen exhaust hoods to pass building inspection. When the hoods failed the inspections, they had to take them all down and send them back to the manufacturer in Tennessee, and wait for them to be sent back. Because of that failure, and what it had cost, all eyes were on our project to make sure we didn't fall into the same traps.

Being new to the job, and having to oversee some of the most complicated projects in my career thus far, I was under a tremendous

amount of pressure to get it right. There was no way I was going to make those kinds of mistakes.

The Coronado Springs project had the largest commercial kitchens in the history of Disney projects, and there were thousands of details that went into the designs. I was determined to make a success of my section, and prove my worth to the company. This was the way I could add value, and so it was important to me.

One of the highlights of my first big project was when I called a meeting with about 30 people, and prepared a list of questions to make sure every detail was taken care of. I called on the engineers, architects, sub-contractors, fire safety personnel, plumbers, electricians, A/C contractors, and even the building inspectors from the Building Department. There were also chefs and Food Service managers from Disney, and we all painstakingly went through the plans to ensure that every last need was met, and every last regulation was complied with. Sure enough, as we went through all the drawings, we discovered things that were missing. I was determined to avoid the scheduling and coordination train wreck that happened on Disney's Boardwalk project.

I went to great lengths to ensure that everything was corrected and that nothing was left out. By the end of the meeting, four or five people actually approached me and thanked me – saying it was one of the most productive meetings they had ever been a part of.

When the time came to inspect the finished work, the kitchen exhaust hoods passed with flying colors on the first inspection.

With perseverance and commitment, the project continued successfully. A year into the project we were already six months ahead of schedule. I had taken over the landscaping assignment from another engineer, and most of it was completed already. The trees were planted way ahead of time. We had 10 or 12 fountains, and six huge pools, with a replica of a Mayan pyramid complete with a

waterfall flowing down the stairs. It was an attractive and well-conceived design, and the finished product was a delight to behold. If you ever visit Walt Disney World in Orlando Florida, I highly recommend you check out the Coronado Springs Resort. It's a showpiece of construction excellence!

I was driven, and determined to succeed, and so I was hustling and doing good work. Even though I had this complex job, it still felt as if I had less responsibility on my shoulders than I did when I worked at the smaller companies. There was a lot of red tape, and a lot of time spent in administration, rather than doing what I loved – which was building things. The work was intensive, and the constant pressure was draining.

A part of me was already looking for the next stepping stone.

I started looking in the papers for foreclosure properties, and toying with the idea of getting into that line of business. My plan was to buy run-down and dilapidated old homes, fix them up, and sell them for a profit. I went to look at a few properties, and even had discussions with some of my friends who expressed interest in going into business with me. We discussed it, but none of them followed through, or actually invested.

As always, it's not so important what people say or promise they're going to do, it's more important to see what they actually do. A lot of people have the dream of starting their own business, and living on their own terms, but most of the time it's just empty speculation. It takes real commitment and passion to actually turn that dream into a reality.

Choosing the wrong partners is one of the biggest reasons that startup companies fail. When selecting business partners you should always find people who have the same drive and passion, and someone whose skills and interests compliment your own. If you can find someone who has the skills and abilities that you lack, or that enjoys

doing some of the things that you don't enjoy doing in business – it could be a good partnership. Unfortunately most would-be partners are all talk, and no action.

In May 1996 I got married, and we closed on our house, and moved in.

In July I started my own company, incorporated an S corporation, and set my sights on the future. I was looking for properties to buy, so I got a few realtors to search for the perfect property, and started making my plans.

After a few months of searching unsuccessfully for the right opportunity, I stumbled across a company based in downtown Orlando that specialized in finding and identifying the kinds of fixer-upper properties I was interested in.

You could buy these properties for 60-70 cents on the dollar, and after completing all the repairs, you could re-sell the property for a profit. There were specialized loans called 'hard equity' loans which covered 100% of the purchase price, provided that you had the funds to place in escrow for the repairs and alterations. As you completed work on the property they would release portions of the funds back to you. It was basically a short-term construction loan – and that suited me perfectly.

I looked at all the options, and worked out that I had about \$50,000 if I maxed out all my credit cards. A couple of the properties I looked at seemed perfect. I was chomping at the bit to get started, because this was what I had been dreaming of doing, ever since I saw it happen as a kid, back in my neighborhood.

Over the years I had considered taking different career paths – either as a bartender, or working my whole life for a construction company, but compared to this, those options didn't seem nearly as exciting.

I've always had a natural talent for looking at a derelict building and seeing what it would look like once it had been repaired. My mind works like that.

This company had two properties going at the right price, and when I looked at them, I could see the potential. It felt right, and I knew I could do it, but of course, there were going to be difficulties.

I was just 26 years old, and had been married for less than a year, and this venture was going to take everything I had. There was no room for half measures or for playing it safe. I would have to put absolutely everything on the line, and take a big risk.

In hindsight, the smart way to do it would probably have been to keep working my job at Centex Rooney while I slowly completed this project on the side, using other people to do the repairs for me. Working 40 to 50 hours a week at my full time job, there was no way I could finish the project on my own – but that's exactly what I wanted to do. I felt it was my calling, and my passion, and I was itching to get started.

I made the decision, bought the property, and quit my job at Centex Rooney.

I went to speak to Gary Wilson, the superintendent – a man I really respected and admired. I sat down and told him that I was leaving. I still remember his words:

“Corey, I think it's fucking great. A young guy like you, leaving to go start your own company, and do your own thing. Because you know what?”

“What?” I asked.

“You can always come back and do this shit.”

He was the only one, out of an office of fifty people, who said anything positive about my choice, and I really appreciated what he said. It meant a lot to me.

My First Solo Project

I finished work on a Friday, and the following Monday I put all my tools in the car, and drove to the house to start working. It was exhilarating.

My wife helped me tear up the carpets, and I started clearing out all the junk in the house so I could get to work. We made a huge pile of rubble outside on the street. Fortunately the city services in Orlando will come and collect big loads of junk if you call them. So that's what we did. Then it was time to set to work on my dream project.

The fixer-upper was a little two bedroom, one bathroom house built in the 1950's – and it was by no means a mansion. It was more in the line of a first-time buyer's house, approximately 1,000 square feet in size. That didn't matter in the least to me – it was my very own project, and I was finally living my dream.

I was in heaven as I set to work, turning that dilapidated old wreck into the vision I saw in my mind's eye. It was very rewarding to watch it slowly take shape.

I did all the drywall work that needed to be done inside, and framed some walls. I needed to put in new windows and shutters, and I had to hire someone to help me put on a new roof. As the days and then the weeks began to roll by, one section after the next started to take shape.

The floors in the kitchen and bathroom were quite bad, so I put in new ceramic tile there. I installed a new vanity and toilet, and replaced much of the lighting. I altered the front section of the house, which allowed me to make it into another bedroom. Then I re-screened the back porch and put a brand new back door in. I also replaced the front door, and spent a little bit of money on it, adding a brass kick plate, and a brass door knocker. I even spent \$160 on a nice new door pull, just because I felt it really made a difference to

the way the house displayed. It's those fine touches that make the difference between average and exceptional work.

It was great to see the transformation happening in front of me, coming from the work I was doing with my very own hands, but I was cutting it extremely close with the timing. About five or six weeks into the project I hired a contractor with an airless spray gun to do the painting – that was a job I really didn't want to do myself, and time was running out.

I had seeded the lawn, and kept watering and tending the plants as I went along, and finally it started to look good enough to put on the market. In fact, it was better than 'good.' It was immaculate – it looked like a brand new house, and smelled like one too. It showed well, and so I was confident that it would sell quickly.

This has been one of my core values throughout my working career. Whatever you're doing, you need to be adding value. To do that, you need to give your best, work with passion and commitment, and the results will be sure to follow.

I was confident, but on the other hand, there was no time to lose. I had sunk all my available money into this venture, along with a second property that I had bought, and pretty soon my mortgage payments would be due. I no longer had an income from my job, and so the stakes were high. I was all in, and the moment of truth was fast approaching.

My father and my father-in-law were both very concerned about my choices. They thought I was stupid for going about it in this way, quitting my job and taking the plunge. They warned me that it might end in bankruptcy, and put a strain on my marriage. There wasn't much support from that end.

This came at a time when the relationship with my father was just finally starting to improve, after all the trouble we'd gone through in earlier years, and although he didn't support me directly, at least he

backed off and didn't bust my balls about it too much. He could see how I felt about it.

I really believed in myself, and I believed in my dream too. I was willing to take the risk, and if it didn't work out, I would figure something out.

The company that had helped me find and buy the property also helped me sell it once I was done with the work. After just two weeks there was already an offer to buy the home. Two sisters were interested in buying the house – and the thing that sold it was that expensive brass door pull I'd added. When I found out about that detail, it made me chuckle.

The timing of the sale was getting critical, though, and there were concerns that the buyer's loan wouldn't be approved in time. If everything went according to plan, there was only a matter of two or three days between when I would get paid, and when my mortgage payments were due. It was a tense situation, and everything was on the line.

Ever since my early twenties I had experienced a recurring pattern with nightmares when I got stressed. I would dream that I was still working at Chuck's Steak House, suffering from bar-rot, and really hating my job and my life. Even worse, I often dreamed that I hadn't studied for a test – Mechanical and Electrical Equipment for Buildings, Part II. It was one of those classes I had to re-take because of all the delays. If I failed, I would have to wait another whole year before I could take that class again because it's only offered during the spring semester. I would wake up in a cold sweat, and realize only after a few minutes that I'd finished college years ago. There was no test to study for. In reality I had earned a good enough grade on that exam to pass – I think I got a C. I had ended up with a 3.0 cumulative GPA when I graduated college.

It's a typical anxiety dream, but it felt very real. All these emotions were tied up in my life's dream, my business, my success and failure – and it was intense. Any time I got really stressed or worried about something, the feeling would return.

I remember sitting in my little office at home in Davenport, Florida. It was three or four in the afternoon, and my wife was at work. We lived up on the hill overlooking a marshland area, and from where I sat I could see the pool, Jacuzzi, and look down over the forest. I was thinking to myself: If the sale doesn't close, by this time next week I'm not going to have enough money to make my mortgage payment. It was a curious mixture of peaceful acceptance, helplessness and tense foreboding.

When I left Centex Rooney, Mike Wood said some words to me that haunted me for a long time afterwards. I still remember that conversation quite clearly. He told me that he had always pegged me as the entrepreneurial type, and had often wondered when I would make a go of it on my own. He said that he was willing to take me back if my solo venture failed, but what he said after that really hit a nerve:

“You can come back if it doesn't work out for you, but remember this, if you do decide to finally come back, I ask that you come back for good.”

I thought about those words many times after hearing them that day. I could imagine becoming a lifer in the construction industry – like many of the people that I'd worked with along the line. Many of them seemed to be stuck in the same line of work until retirement. It was as if Mike was telling me to go out and get this 'entrepreneurial' bug out of my system, once and for all, and then return to practical reality, and security. He was expecting me to return to Centex with my tail between my legs, and give up on my big dreams.

One of the things I struggled with when I left the company, and made up my mind to start out on my own, was a feeling of self-doubt. A lot of the people that I had been working with were much smarter than me, and had done better in college than I had. There were questions in my mind, along with doubts and insecurities. I was undermining the belief in my abilities and my determination to succeed – sabotaging myself.

Wasn't it arrogant of me to think I could do any better than those men who had so much more experience than I did? Who the hell was I to think I could leave, start my own business, and become successful? My managers and peers had more experience, more knowledge, and many of them were smarter, or more qualified than me.

I had been preparing for, and building up to this dream for eight long years. It was an all-consuming passion and a burning desire in my life. I had this dream that had shaped each and every one of my choices and my daily activities. I loved building things. I loved the construction industry, and above all, I really wanted to buy, fix and sell homes.

Lessons from Role Models

What helped me get through that self-doubt, and what gave me courage to pursue what I wanted to do, was remembering what I had learned from mentors like Tony Robbins, and learning from the successes and failures of famous entrepreneurs.

One of the most inspiring, for many would-be entrepreneurs and high-achievers, is the story of Steve Jobs.

Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak (or “Woz”) were introduced to each other in 1971 by a mutual friend, Bill Fernandez. The two Steve’s got along thanks to their shared love of technology and pranks.

Starting a huge tech company was never the goal, in those early days – it was all about making computers, and having fun.

Jobs and Wozniak were always coming up with pranks such as rigging up a painting of a hand showing the middle finger to be displayed during a graduation ceremony at Jobs' school, and a call to the Vatican that nearly got them access to the Pope.

The two friends were also using their technology know-how to build 'blue boxes' that made it possible to make long distance phone calls for free. They wanted to impress their friends and college associates with how much they could accomplish using only the most basic resources.

They never intended to start a business. They just started out building computers for themselves because they were cool and they wanted one for themselves. Then their friends wanted ones also. Once people saw the computers they were building, everybody wanted one – and the vision for the future began to take shape. The personal computer could revolutionize the world – so that’s what they set out to do – and the rest is history.

Most people know the story of Apple Computer, but his journey to success with *Pixar* is a particularly inspiring one too.

“The inspiration you seek is already within you. Be silent and listen.” ~ Rumi

Just about everyone, especially those with kids, has seen the logo of the desk lamp hopping up and down. The back-story behind it is inspirational.

Steve Jobs was ousted from Apple, the company he had originally created, during a corporate power struggle in 1985. After that he spent some time developing NeXT, the computer firm he’d started after Apple.

In 1986 he bought the computer division of Lucasfilm, the production company started by George Lucas (who created *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones*). Lucas’ business was in need of cash, following his 1983 divorce, which also coincided with the sudden drop off in revenues from *Star Wars* licenses following the release of *Return of the Jedi*, and the disastrous box-office performance of *Howard the Duck*.

The selling price for Pixar was \$5 million, and many of Steve Job’s friends and associates thought he was mad for buying the company.

At the time, Pixar was a high-end computer hardware company whose core product was the Pixar Image Computer, a system primarily sold to government agencies and the medical community. Lucasfilm didn’t really know what to do with the technology. Steve Jobs had a much bigger vision for what it could do. If they could animate a desk lamp hopping up and down – why not a full-length feature film?

Steve Jobs sunk tremendous amounts of his money into the venture, over the next couple of years. Besides a few TV commercials, it wasn’t a huge success. He spent years working on the project,

through many trials, and many errors. Advisors cautioned against sinking more money into it – throwing good money after bad, and against choosing to pursue what seemed like a dead end. The visionary entrepreneur persisted, because he believed in his vision for the software.

Steve Jobs, a biography by Walter Isaacson is an inspiring read, and contains a wealth of information about his journey to success. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to learn about entrepreneurship and being a high achiever. There's one point that stands out for me about this story:

"If you really look closely, most overnight successes took a long time."

In fact it took a decade for Jobs to become successful with Pixar.

"Patience is the key to joy."

~ Rumi

It's often the same with people who become super successful – it's a recurring pattern that you will find in most success stories. We don't hear about all the failures, all the stepping-stones, and all the projects that just didn't work out. We only get to know their names once they make it. It seems like an overnight success to us, but in reality, usually there's a lot of trial and error that comes before that moment.

The same holds true for any form of success, whether it's in business, or in sport. We don't hear about all the time spent in the gym, the pain and the commitment, the sacrifices, the repetitions, or the self-discipline – we only hear about the successful athlete.

By 1994 Jobs was reaching the end, and considering selling Pixar to other companies that had made offers, such as Hallmark Cards, Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, and Oracle CEO and co-founder Larry Ellison.

But things finally began to change for Pixar when Jobs began a serious collaboration with the Disney Company, and demonstrated to them what the software he was developing could actually do. The Disney executives were impressed, and could see the potential. It was the future of animation. They came up with an idea for a story, and a movie, and Disney agreed to give their full support.

The movie *Toy Story* was released for the 1995 Christmas season, and went on to gross more than \$362 million worldwide. It was an overnight success that had taken a decade to create. The animation was unlike anything seen before, completely computer generated, and people loved it. They were blown away by the quality of the graphics, supported by the charming story. Kids and adults alike couldn't get enough of it.

Everybody who thought Steve Jobs had made a huge mistake had to eat humble pie. Disney purchased Pixar in 2006 at a valuation of \$7.4 billion, a transaction that resulted in Jobs becoming Disney's largest single shareholder at the time.

Another interesting facet of the story is the development that took place in Steve Jobs. The Pixar journey changed him, and there was a kind of personal evolution. Disney and Pixar president Ed Catmull came to know another side of the famous entrepreneur while working with him at Pixar.

In Catmull's book, *Creativity, Inc.* he explained: *"While he never lost his intensity, we watched him develop the ability to listen. More and more, he could express empathy and caring and patience. He became truly wise. The change in him was real, and it was deep."*

In 1996 Apple, the company that Jobs originally created, but got kicked out of, was about to go bankrupt. They begged Jobs to come back, as 'Interim CEO', when they were literally 90 days from going out of business. Quite a few of the original staff members that Jobs had hired, were still working for the company, 10 years later, and

when he held a meeting, he asked them why they were still there. They answered that it was because they believed in what the company stood for, and in his original vision for the personal computer. They wanted to create really great technology products that made people's lives better. Remember, the original Apple computer in the 1970's had also taken a decade to come to fruition.

“Genius is eternal patience.”

~ Michelangelo

This is something that you will find as a kind of common denominator in many hugely successful enterprises. The rise to financial domination of companies like Microsoft, Apple, or Google didn't just happen overnight. It took someone with vision, and a dream to struggle through the years of hardship and trial and error before they got where they are today. Besides the hard work, there also needs to be a passion and a love for the product or service – for adding value to people's lives.

Mark Zuckerberg from Facebook started his software in his dorm room. It was experimental, and he created it because he loved the idea. It was a novelty, a social curiosity, and something that his fellow students enjoyed using.

Soon everyone at Harvard was joining, and it wasn't long before other Ivy League universities linked into the network. Eventually it was opened to the public, and it just took off. The secret ingredient was Zuckerberg's passion and love for the usefulness of Facebook. It was a great tool, and it made people's lives better. People could connect with each other in a brand new way – it's nice to know what others are up to, but you don't have to directly call them to find out. You could share photos of your kids or your holidays, but there was no pressure. It started out as an idea – something that he thought was useful, and would love to have. He hoped other people would use it and enjoy it – he didn't set out to become a business mogul – that just

kind of happened along the way. It took at least a decade to become a billion dollar business, and it took a lot of hard work, trial and error – and the same can be said for any of those remarkable companies.

*“Patience is power; with time and patience the mulberry leaf
becomes a silk gown.”*

~ Chinese Proverb

One Step at a Time

So there I was, eight long years after first conceiving my dream, and I was finally starting my own company, and working towards my goal.

I knew it wouldn't be an overnight success, and I was willing to take it one step at a time, because I had the passion and the vision. I believed in it so strongly that I gave it everything I could give.

As I sat there in my little office, overlooking the pool down towards the forest, I felt a sense of peace, because I knew there was nothing more I could do. I had done my best. Now it was up to the loan officer to get the buyers approved.

My biggest nightmare was the thought of having to go back and work for Centex Rooney again. That would spell the end for me. That would mean the death of my dream, and it would mean I would never be successful as an entrepreneur. At least, that's the way I felt about it at the time.

A lot of the people working there had settled for a lifetime working for that company. They were happy to do their work, and put away some money for their retirement one day. They had no ambitions beyond that limited world-view, and that way of life. That's not the way I wanted to end up.

I was on the verge of turning 27, and I didn't know if my dream was going to fall to pieces all around me, or work out and lead me to success. I spent a week in a kind of limbo, not knowing which way it would turn out. The last thing I wanted to do was go back to Mike Wood and ask for my job back, with my tail between my legs.

The difficulties of real estate entrepreneurship were all too real, looming like a seemingly insurmountable obstacle before me. In the real estate game you don't make a single cent until the sale closes,

and the deal goes through. All the funding for the initial investment remains tied up, along with the money you've spent on the electric and water bills, repair costs, mortgage payments and closing costs. Once the sale finally goes through, you get all that back, plus your profit, of course, but up until that moment, you can't touch any of it. The equity is all there, but none of it is liquid. You can't use any of it to pay your bills.

During the week that the deal was supposed to come through, time felt like it was dragging on. One day after the next came and went, and I was getting more nervous with every passing hour.

The real estate agent that was working for the buyers, was an interesting character, and a super friendly person. His name was Lee Winfrey, and he was a huge black guy, getting on in years, and he only had one leg. He'd been in the industry for many years, having had to sell his own business when he got sick and had to have his leg amputated. He had this saying, whenever the going got tough:

"Hey, it's just another day in real estate."

On Wednesday the phone rang, and Lee was on the line.

"I've got some good news," he said, "we're all set to close on Friday."

"That's one of the best phone calls I've ever taken in my life," I told him, and it was true. I felt relieved and elated. I had just avoided a catastrophe, and my first solo project was an official success.

So on Friday I went in to sign the documents, and it turned out to be quite a long and boring session. Lee actually ended up falling asleep, and started snoring half way through the proceedings. There was nothing boring about it for me, though. I walked away with a check for \$26,000, and for the time being, my financial worries were over.

After deducting the repair costs, closing costs, and mortgage payments that I had to make while holding on to the property, my \$10,000 profit margin wasn't exactly spectacular. I was happy with it, though, and I thought to myself that if I could earn at least as much flipping houses as I could from working full time at Centex Rooney, I could say that I was successful. I would be an entrepreneur, and could set my own working hours. I would be doing what I loved to do, and I could at least earn a fairly decent living doing it. More importantly, I could now pay my bills on time.

Flush with cash, I resumed work on the second property, but I could already see clearly that cash flow was going to be my biggest obstacle.

I was also concerned that I had placed all my eggs in one basket, so to speak, by working through the real estate company I had found. I had to rely on them to find buyers for my houses. I also had to rely on them to arrange for my buyers to get financed. I had very little control over the process. After fixing a house, it was all up to someone else to push the sale through. They had competent staff, but they also had close to 30 or 40 other properties, with other investors, and whichever house was most likely to sell was the one that got preference.

I realized that it would be a smart move for me to work for them, and learn all the details about what they were doing. I needed to be able to find my own foreclosure properties, and take over more of the process by myself. Instead of making only \$10,000 on a house, I could conceivably make \$15 – 20,000 per property.

I was constantly at their offices, or calling them, scouting for new properties and asking tons of questions. I wanted to keep learning as much as I could about the entire process. The general manager of the company became friends with me, and one day I sat down with him, fully intending to use my negotiation and interview skills to get my foot in the door.

I knew that it was achievable. My experience working for construction firms helped, and when the company saw the repairs and alterations I had done on my first property, they said that it was some of the best work they had seen from any real estate dealer.

Real estate dealers are people who buy foreclosure properties and fix them up, as opposed to the developers who build new homes on properties.

What I most wanted to know was how to find more of the right kinds of properties, and the ones with great potential, and better profit margins. So that's what I asked him. He laughingly replied that the only way to do that was to come and work for him as an acquisition agent.

"Great, when can I start?" I asked.

He told me that he'd hired somebody just a few weeks ago, but that there might be an opportunity in a month or so. I was willing to take the job as soon as possible, because I could see that this was going to be the next stepping-stone on my road to success.

I had already invested in two other properties with my father-in-law, and I was making plans to expand and maximize my business as quickly as possible.

I knew that it would be impossible to do all the repair work on all the properties by myself in a short space of time, so I started hiring sub-contractors to do much of the work. My experience in the construction industry helped me to be able to do that efficiently, but still, it was an additional cost. The more you 'sub-out,' the more expensive each job becomes, and it tends to chip away at your profit margins, which aren't phenomenal to begin with.

By taking this job, new doors would open for me, and I could learn a great deal.

I would be able to cherry-pick the best properties for my own investments, and simultaneously have access to the back side of the loan industry, I could learn how to sell properties, and get my real estate license. I would be able to learn all about the private ‘hard equity loans,’ and make valuable connections for my own business.

There was a lot to know about end-user financing. The Federal Housing Administration, (or FHA), isn’t the only thing I needed to come to grips with. The Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac) act as support for lenders, so they can give more money to potential home buyers. These organizations are focused on promoting home loans, especially to low and moderate-income home buyers.

Entering the Real Estate Industry

In February 1997 my opportunity arrived, and a job opened up. I enrolled in real estate class, passed the necessary state test, and soon acquired a real estate license.

This was to lead to the next stepping-stones on my journey.

I learned all about buying houses on the courthouse steps, using the Multiple Listing Service, HUD foreclosures, and I gradually started developing relationships with realtors that specialized in foreclosure properties.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) got all the FHA loans that had gone bad, and there was a special procedure to bid on those properties. I learned how to bid on and win those properties, and it was invaluable information that would help me to succeed in my future business ventures.

I kept running my own business on the side while I worked for them, and when I found a really good property, with a potentially big profit margin, I would keep it for myself, while still flipping four or five properties a month for the company. This strategy was securing my cash flow, and at the same time benefiting my own venture. It was a win-win arrangement. The company had years of experience, and had already made all the mistakes, and found solutions to all the problems in this niche. They had already learned about underestimating costs, over-spending on properties, properties that did not sell easily – they had already stepped on all the landmines, as it were. By working there, I could acquire all that experience, and I got to know all the mortgage investors that financed the private loans.

I realized that quitting my job at Centex Rooney prematurely had been a mistake, so I changed my approach, and took this new opportunity to correct it.

It's one of the most important lessons I've learned on my path to success: When one approach isn't working, you simply have to take a different approach. No matter how many times it happens, even if it feels like a complete failure, you need to keep trying different avenues until one finally works out.

In many ways it was a good choice to work there, but as with every decision, there was also a downside.

The owner of the company wanted to start replacing the agents with personnel on a much lower pay-grade. They were going to start adjusting the commission splits down to next to nothing – in the company's favor. I also started noticing that they were not always doing ethical business. They fudged the numbers on some of the repair projects in order to make more money.

While working there for a year and a half, I met my future business partners, Paul and James.

Paul was a successful entrepreneur, and was speculating with properties of his own on the side, as I was doing. Both he and James were my colleagues at the time, and none of us liked the direction that the company was taking.

Divorce

During this time I had to make one of the hardest decisions of my life.

Although my business was starting to become successful, the same could not be said about my marriage. After a year, it was becoming clear to me that staying together would be unfair to both of us. I discuss this in depth in my first book, but I mention it here because it highlights the importance of learning to trust and follow your heart.

This was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do, but it was also a powerful lesson. I learned from all the pain we both endured through the breakup. After it was over, I gained a renewed inner strength, and a deeper understanding of my own intuitions – my gut-feelings. I made a promise to myself that if I ever got married again, I would only do it if it felt absolutely right; if my head and my heart fully agreed.

When we separated, I moved in with my best friend, who had a house nearby, with a completely empty room. My wife stayed in the house, and I kept paying the bills on it while we figured everything out.

Perhaps I can add one more lesson in life that I learned at this time – which is particularly useful advice that I offer to many of my clients today who are going through a divorce. If you're reading this, and you're going through a divorce, or thinking about it – it might help.

Divorce attorneys thrive on conflict – so if you can avoid it, you'll end up saving a ton of money.

My wife and I separated on relatively good terms. I was going to take care of all the credit card debt, and I soon arranged for someone to buy our house. We each hired divorce attorneys. I paid about \$3,000 in total – but she gave her attorney a huge retainer of \$6,500.

Things changed when she started dating somebody new – a dentist. He started interfering, and next thing I knew I was getting letters from her attorney demanding alimony – because she had decided to go back to school. We had already agreed on everything – so it was a surprise to me.

The attorneys started exchanging letters – and of course, all the while the bills kept adding up. What should have only cost a couple of thousand dollars was starting to become very expensive, and dragging on for months. Every letter cost \$250.

The dentist left the picture after a while, because the two of them didn't get along, and when I spoke to my ex to find out what was going on, she didn't know anything about it. She didn't have a head for these kinds of things.

Her attorney was trying to burn up as much of that fat retainer as he could, most probably having spent it all already, and not wanting to refund anything. I called my ex's father, and explained to him what was going on. He thanked me for letting him know, and the very next morning I got a call from my attorney telling me he had a signed separation agreement – we could go ahead and finalize things.

Always remember – if you're going through a divorce - do your best to prevent things from becoming ugly and adversarial, because at the end of the day the only ones who are going to win are the attorneys. Try to settle things amicably on your own if possible.

The Business Grows

For a year I slept on a four-inch thick foam mattress, with piles of clothes scattered on the floor around me. As dismal as that sounds, it was actually one of the happiest times for me. I was totally immersed in my work, and doing exactly what I had dreamt of doing as a teenager.

James and I became good friends at work. I knew his family, and his kids, and we used to talk often. He expressed his desire to leave the company, and we kicked around the idea of going into business together. In order to do that we would need mortgage investors, people who could put up the private money to provide the hard equity loans for the real estate dealers who bought our foreclosure properties.

At the same time, discussions with Paul led to a possible way to secure the mortgage investors we needed. A woman we all knew where we worked, and who he was really close to, had all the necessary relationships with those private investors. They all treated her like a granddaughter, and she had influence over their decisions. Paul and I had already bought an investment property together, so we knew each other quite well by that stage. We went to lunch one day and discussed a possible partnership, and I mentioned that James would be perfect to sell the houses for us. We were all in agreement.

The three of us approached Paul's friend, who also agreed, and all four of us hatched a plan to break away from the company and start out on our own. We would stagger our resignations from the company, both to make it easier for them, and at the same time, to avoid arousing suspicion about what we were up to. Of course, we would now be in direct competition with our previous employers.

We found a 1,500 square foot building that was the perfect office space. We furnished it, and installed phones and cubicles, and a

conference room. One by one we left the company, and started out on our own in June 1998.

We went from earning 33% commission to earning 100% on each project. In the first month we were in business together we made a \$60,000 profit.

The beauty of it was that we had helped the company grow, just as they had helped us to grow – and now we had all the skills we needed to make a success on our own.

I became the real estate broker, and we started a mortgage company to provide financing, and we started a holding company for the properties. When we would contract to buy a new property, the mortgage company would provide the financing for the real estate dealer. 99% of the time we would find a buyer before we had to close on the property with our holding company, and could simply assign the holding companies purchase rights to the real estate dealer. If we did not find a dealer before we were contractually obligated to close, we could close on the property with our holding company, which would eat up our profit, but this ensured our reputation that we always close 100% of the properties that we contracted for. This gave us leverage with the banks because they could always count on us to close. We would also service the loans, borrowing the money at 10-12% interest rates, making 3 or 4% spread, simple interest loans.

It worked really well, and four or five months later we were making good money. I made \$160,000 in the first year, and I remember one month Paul said to me:

“You should get yourself a Porsche.”

Not long before that my eye had been drawn to a car I saw, while visiting the Florida Keys with my best friend Ryan – who was also the best man at my wedding. It was a Lotus Esprit – like the one that turns into a submarine in the old James Bond movie, *The Spy Who Loved Me*. It was a beautiful and rare machine, painted Ferrari red,

with OZ rims, big wide tires, a 350 Horse Power twin-turbo V8 engine in the back, and a wing on the tail. It was a two-seater, and it looked amazing.

It was two years old and had 3,000 miles on the odometer. It was absolutely fucking gorgeous, and I fell in love with the car, and bought it. They only imported 100 of these things into the US each year.

I went down to pick it up, and drove it down to the office – and enjoyed all the attention it was bringing. My best friend asked me if he could borrow the car to go and show off the next day at work.

He was my best friend, so I let him take it.

Not too long afterwards the phone rang. It was my friend, and he was out of breath.

“Dude... you’re not going to believe it. I wrecked your car.”

“That’s not even fucking funny.” I said, not wanting to believe what I was hearing.

“No, I’m serious man, I wrecked your car.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me, I’ve only just got the thing, and you’ve already wrecked the goddam car?”

He had taken the car out in the housing development where he sold new homes, and he’d been hot rodding around with one of the other sales guys, driving recklessly. There was some sand on the road, and he lost control, not used to the power and the handling. The car spun around and smashed into a concrete light pole, and it snapped the pole in half. Luckily nobody was hurt, but the side of the car was destroyed, rupturing one of the fuel tanks. The damages ran into the tens of thousands of dollars.

I mention this episode, because it was one of the things that taught me about the value of true friendship. Real friends don't mistreat you, and never take advantage of you.

Ryan didn't make much of an effort after he wrecked the car to make amends for his mistake. It was a selfish streak in his nature that I'd noticed before. He was a good looking guy, who worked as a male model in his late teens to early 20's, and he used to indulge in taking drugs, and started running into trouble. I lent him a couple of grand in our twenties, when he pissed off his modeling agent, gaining weight, and not getting too many modeling gigs. He was supposed to sell his motorcycle to pay me back – but it never happened.

When I was making up my mind to divorce my wife, I confided in him about what was going on. It turns out that he betrayed my confidence, and when I gathered the courage to tell my wife, she already knew. His motive was not a noble one – he was basically trying to ingratiate himself with my ex-wife, in order to get into her pants. It was underhanded, and unworthy for a true friend to behave that way.

I eventually had to sell the motorcycle, without any help from him. The pattern kept repeating itself. At one point James employed him in our company, and he worked there for over a year. He felt that because he was my friend, and also a friend of James – that he was entitled to special treatment, and that he was going to be made an equal partner. Once he realized that it wasn't going to happen, he left the company, blew everybody off, and bad-mouthed all of us.

When we were friends in high school, my parents didn't like him at all. They had warned me that he was a user, and a bullshit artist.

Years later I ran into him, and we chatted for a while, but we never repaired the friendship. I realized that he was just one of those people – no matter how much you do for them, it's never reciprocated. In the end, it's better to part ways.

The Questions We Ask Ourselves

I was earning far more than I would have if I had stayed on at Centex Rooney, and I was learning something vital about the mindset of successful people. The difference between successful and average, or unsuccessful people, is the way each of them deals with failure.

One of the things that Tony Robbins says is:

“The quality of your life is in direct proportion to the quality of the questions that you consistently ask yourself.”

The average person asks a negative kind of question when he fails, or when something goes wrong:

“Why is this happening to me? Why do these kinds of things always happen to me? Why am I such a failure?”

Looking at things from that perspective leaves little room for a positive outcome. Your mind is forced to come up with a negative sort of answer.

Successful people always tend to frame the question differently when something bad happens:

“What can I learn from this? What can I do differently next time around so I can be more efficient, and get to where I want to be more quickly?”

Consistently asking high quality, positive questions, ones that aim at solutions instead of excuses, ultimately shape the destiny of your life.

This strategy can influence the way you bounce back from every setback, and set the tone for your journey to success. Seeing failure as a necessary precursor to success is what differentiates successful people from the rest of the crowd.

I made my fair share of mistakes, even though I was doing what I loved to do. That never stopped me from learning, adapting and moving forward.

One of my early mistakes with this new business venture was focusing almost exclusively on HUD foreclosure properties and my realtor contacts that specialized in bank foreclosures. I had developed relationships with 25-30 real estate agents that specialized in these properties, and I rarely went onto the Multi Listing Service (MLS) to look for anything else. The agents gave me properties ahead of time, and the arrangement worked in everyone's favor. We got access to the properties before anyone else did, and the agents got to double-end their commission. As long as the price we offered was in line with the Broker Price Opinion (BPO), the banks were happy. We also had a good reputation at the banks, so for a while it worked out perfectly.

“The superior man acts before he speaks, and afterwards speaks according to his action.”

~ Confucius

The Challenge of Partnership

“He who is not satisfied with himself will grow. He who is not sure of his own correctness will learn many things.”

~ Chinese Proverb

What I didn't realize was that the original number of agents working with me, which had started out at 25-30 in number, was slowly dwindling. Over time they either lost their bank foreclosure accounts, or switched their line of specialization, and so the original number of Realtor foreclosure contacts slowly dwindled. When a Realtor I counted on to give me listings lost his account with the bank, they hired another Realtor and those properties went into the MLS, which my partner Paul had exclusivity to as part of our partnership agreement. I had never thought of the possibility that my Realtors would lose their bank foreclosure gravy train pipeline.

But there was more trouble brewing. From the shadows, my partner was making decisions that were going to seriously undermine our new business.

Paul had started scheming behind the scenes, trying to work me out of the company. He had third party interests with other investors that were bidding against me on HUD foreclosures. In effect, I was indirectly bidding against my partner, which I felt was totally unfair. James sided with Paul on the matter, because either way he was making money. There was no sense of loyalty, and they really didn't care, so long as they were making their money. I was basically being bullied by the people who were supposed to have my best interests at heart.

I decided to change my approach once again, in order to adapt to this new, unexpected challenge. I started thinking of ways to change what I was doing in order to make a better profit. Instead of complaining and asking a negative form of question, I was looking at ways to put a positive spin on these new circumstances. Although I was on the receiving end of some underhanded business tactics, I wasn't going to play the victim. I simply needed to change what I was doing.

Our partnership already had a mortgage company, a real estate brokerage, and I was a qualified broker, and we had done really well selling our own properties so far. There was room for expansion, and I saw an opportunity to sell other properties besides the ones we were fixing up ourselves. Plus, I was becoming bored and simply looking for a new challenge.

Much of our advertising to sell our own investment properties that we kept, was done by means of cardboard flip signs on wire frames on roadsides and medians throughout the counties that we worked in, and we were getting a lot of response from those ads. Of course, we had to go through a lot of people to find one that eventually turned into a sale. For every thirty calls that came in we might get one or two qualified buyers.

I discussed my ideas for change with Paul and James, and we restructured our responsibilities in the company so I could focus more on expanding the retail real estate and mortgage side of things. I hired a bunch of guys to put up more signs all over the city. They went out in the wee hours of the morning, and put them up everywhere. You've probably seen these kinds of signs on the corners of streets in the area where you live.

Some areas have restrictions about putting up those kinds of signs, so we had some difficulties from time to time. One day a really nasty code enforcement woman stopped us. She pulled up to our office in her code enforcement pickup truck, just as I was walking out the

front door, and she showed me a whole stack of our signs in the back of her truck.

“You see these in the back of my truck? I’ve been picking up your signs all day long. I’m giving you a week to get all of them off the roads, or I’ll bring you up in front of the code enforcement board, and fine your company!”

I had to sweet-talk my way out of an explosive situation. We’d never been bothered before, but now we were putting thousands of these signs up everywhere. And the signs were working. Hundreds of calls were coming in, and the phones were ringing off the hook.

I hired a couple of real estate agents, and mortgage brokers, and we started doing loans for pre-qualified clients and finding properties on the MLS for them, and my side of the business really began to take off. I was adapting, and learning, and growing the business. I had hit an income ceiling with the foreclosure properties at \$160,000 a year, and here was a possibility to exceed that.

In the meantime Paul wasn’t keeping his end of the bargain. He had let the HUD property division lie fallow, while concentrating only on his side interests for his own gain. The company had invested in equipment and advertising to the tune of \$50,000, over the course of three months. Paul wasn’t happy about it, and he was hoping that I would fail, so he could push me out of the company. That’s the kind of snake that he was. This kind of thing is what ultimately led to the downfall of our partnership.

In the interim I had to adapt again, to compensate for the losses, so I took over the HUD property division once again. It took eight months for the real estate division to get to the point where it was consistently breaking even and profitable, and I had to carry the costs of the employees I had hired to launch it.

In one county after another we were running into problems from the code enforcement agencies because of the thousands of signs we

were putting up. I had to adapt and change, learn from the problem, and find a creative way out of it.

I noticed a cheesy infomercial on a local TV station, done by another company, and decided to pursue that avenue. So I called the Fox 35 station in Orlando, and spoke to an advertising account executive. Television advertising can be pricey, and on a limited budget of \$10,000 we put together our first cheesy infomercial.

It's a little embarrassing to look at those infomercials today. It was my first time in front of the camera, and the quality isn't something I'm proud of. Even so, after a dry spell of five or six months, they finally started to pay off and we had our first closing from a lead from our TV advertising.

My goal was to grow this side of the business so I wouldn't have to rely on foreclosure properties anymore. I was reinvesting most of my profits back into the business in order to grow.

I wasn't financially secure enough to dissolve our partnership and go on my own, so I had to create all these mechanisms to be able to work with my partners. I liked my lifestyle, and my business, and so I decided to create 'a business within a business' to get around the problems I was having with my partners.

After years of constant work, and determination, at long last, the retail division started growing, and eventually we needed more space. Our office space was starting to become crowded.

The odd thing was that as soon as my side of the business became successful and profitable, Paul changed his tune, and became friendly and cooperative towards me all of a sudden. He was kissing my ass, full of flattery and compliments, and simultaneously trying to push James out of the business. He'd done the same thing with James, when he was hoping to push me out of the business.

Fortunately James and I had a stronger relationship than Paul had with either one of us. James and I used to hang out at the office after work some nights, smoke a joint or drink some beers and order a pizza. James would play guitar, and tell me stories from his intriguing past.

“Words are a pretext. It is the inner bond that draws one person to another, not words.”

~ Rumi

An Interlude in Hawaii, and a Shift to Healthy Living

In 1999 I went to Hawaii with my best friend, which resulted in a complete shift in my outlook on healthy living. Growing up, I never really paid much attention to healthy living, and I developed some bad habits as a result.

At this point in my life I weighed 190 pounds, and had constant problems with constipation. I was lucky if I had a bowel movement once a week, and when I did, it was so big and hard that it felt like passing petrified wood. I often suffered badly from digestive problems, and Hemorrhoids.

Although I didn't consider myself overweight, quite honestly, I was struggling to fit into my pants, and I didn't really have a neck anymore. My neck went from my chin to the top of my torso – it was like I had three chins. I felt thick and uncomfortable in every part of my body. I was out of touch with my body, and it was trying to send me a message. Finally, on this trip, I started to listen.

The biggest cause of the problem was my diet. As a child I had fallen into the pattern of eating whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted, and whatever was convenient. Of course, that included a lot of junk food, candy, and McDonalds. The benefits of choosing to eat healthy had just never occurred to me – it wasn't an issue until now.

I struggled with exercise. Even though I was running for ten to fifteen minutes three times a week, it felt like torture every time. Afterwards I was ready to hack up a lung. I was short of breath, and I just couldn't keep up the pace.

During this trip I went through a complete paradigm shift in terms of healthy living. I realized just how important health is, and how it affects your mind, and your entire life.

I made the decision to cut out a lot of things from my diet, and to stick with the program, no matter what.

I cut out all fried foods, pork, red meat, sodas, and junk food. I ate fish, turkey and chicken, together with carbs, vegetables and greens. That eliminated 95% of what I used to eat. I went from eating fast food all the time, and eating extravagant, gorging meals, towards a much healthier way of eating. My main goal was to get healthy, not necessarily to lose weight.

Two weeks after the change I went running, and 45 minutes later I still felt great. I was amazed at the change. Thinking back over my life, I realized that even at high school football practice, when I was much younger and fitter, there were days when running two miles was really easy, and days when I struggled, and fell behind the pack. It was linked directly to what I had been eating during the days leading up to the exercise.

Within six months I dropped from 190 pounds back down to 165, my ideal weight. I had to buy new pants, and I had a neck again. More importantly, I felt much better, and my digestion and bowel movements returned to normal. I was finally getting back in touch with my body, and learning to pay attention to the messages it sent me.

A healthy mind goes hand-in-hand with a healthy body, and a healthy lifestyle. Life is more enjoyable when you feel good about yourself, and when you make the right choices, where diet and exercise are concerned. It boosts your energy levels, your self-confidence, and it sharpens your mind too. It was an important milestone in my journey of personal development.

It's one thing to develop mental and emotional coping tools, but that doesn't mean you can neglect your body. It's a vital component in the process of mastering yourself, and I will discuss it in much more depth in some of the following chapters.

Team Building and Leadership

“Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys; look on them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even unto death.”

~ Sun Tzu

I always tended to hire people who shared my mindset, and my vision, as far as possible. I hired them not only because they had the skills that I was looking for, but because they were people that I actually liked spending time with. I always looked for people who were young, driven and focused, and people with ambition.

All of us on the team were committed to what we were doing, and I always believed in treating my employees well. I would often take them out to lunch, or even the occasional dinner. Sometimes I would take them out to a nightclub and we'd get a VIP table. Other times we hung out at the bar at my home. We had a vibrant group of mostly young and single people, and we partied as hard as we worked. I took care of them, and looked out for them. I treated them like family.

I even let one of my employees move into my house for a while. Andy, who was from Germany, had been kicked out by his wife, and needed a place to stay. I didn't even charge him rent for a year, and when his parents visited from Germany, they stayed there too, free of charge.

That wasn't necessarily a very wise move on my part, as I discovered. I realized after a while that he was basically the kind of person who was always looking out for number one, and always looking at ways to benefit himself in every situation. In fact, he actually said those exact words to me at one stage.

As Maya Angelou says: “When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.”

My employees were superstars, and other companies were constantly head-hunting them, so it was important to me to develop strong ties of loyalty with my team.

The biggest reason that people leave companies and look for employment elsewhere isn’t always about compensation and paychecks. More often it’s because they don’t feel as if they’re listened to. If they give feedback and try to make positive change, their superiors ignore it, or shut it down. They no longer feel a part of the organization, and leave.

As I saw it, I was a servant-leader. My job was to give the people around me the right kind of environment, and the right opportunities to succeed and thrive.

“A leader leads by example not by force.” ~ Sun Tzu

When you allow your staff to give input, and show them that their ideas and contributions matter, they feel as if they have a stake in the company. They perform better because they feel as if they matter, as if they are respected, and as if what they think and what they do is important.

That obviously doesn’t mean that you have to do exactly what your employees think you should do, all the time. It means that they should feel as if their opinions matter, and that you are offering a reasonable explanation when you don’t take their advice. If they see that their feedback is helping to shape the destiny of the company, they will feel as if they are a part of something bigger than themselves, and a part of something that is actually worthwhile working for.

My job as a leader was to add value to their lives. My duty was to help them achieve their objectives.

If you help your employees achieve what they want in life, or attain their personal objectives, you're building them up as individuals. As a side effect, you will achieve your own goals, and become even more successful. When your competition comes head-hunting, your employees will turn them away, because they won't be able to match what they're getting from you.

If you treat employees as disposable commodities, as objects to use and abuse just to further your own ambitions, you won't get the same results. If you only like people when they're hitting their targets, but treat them badly when they don't, you won't be fostering trust and loyalty. You won't be attracting loyal and efficient employees – instead, you'll be driving them away.

I had very loyal employees. I paid them well, and created a good environment for them to work in – a place where they felt motivated, supported and involved.

People have six basic needs that are natural and innate in each and every one of us. Tony Robbins lists them this way:

1. **Certainty:** The assurance that you can avoid pain and gain pleasure. The need for, and the assurance of being able to breathe, to eat and sleep. The assurance that you'll have a roof over your head, and a bed to sleep in.
2. **Uncertainty/Variety:** The need for the unknown, change, new stimuli. Life needs to be interesting enough to keep you looking forward to the next day.
3. **Significance:** Feeling unique, important, special or needed. (Making team members feel like they matter is an example).
4. **Connection/Love:** A strong feeling of closeness or union with someone or something.
5. **Growth:** An expansion of your capacity, capability or understanding, including personal growth and spiritual evolution.
6. **Contribution:** A sense of service and focus on helping, giving to and supporting others – In other words, *adding value*.

The key is the last item on the list: *Contribution*. Focusing on contributing to any relationship, with another human being, and concentrating on meeting that vital human need, will make the other needs fall into place naturally. You will start to meet those other needs by extension. If you're contributing in the right way, you will feel secure in your job. There will also naturally be variety, significance, connection and growth.

Whether you're an employee or an entrepreneur, your goal at work is to add value to people's lives. You do that through using your gifts, skills and talents, and giving your time. The more you develop your skills and talents, the more value you can add, and the more successful you become.

In the book *Outliers*, author Malcolm Gladwell says that it takes roughly ten thousand hours of practice to achieve mastery in any field. That's quite an investment, so it makes sense to choose something that you love to invest the time in.

My strategy in business, and the lessons I learned at this point in my life can be summarized as follows: Focus your life on becoming great at something that you really love doing. Surround yourself with like-minded, and inspiring people, and keep adding value with everything you do.

"When you work with people whom you like and you admire because they're so good at what they do, it doesn't feel like work. It's like you're playing." ~ Stan Lee

Work becomes effortless when you're doing what you love to do. If you're working purely for money, you'll probably work only just hard enough to avoid getting fired. In the long run, the motivation will never last if you don't believe in the product or service you're delivering – in other words, if you're not truly adding value.

Expansion

Our small office was running out of space after three years of business. The rent was reasonable, and we had installed cubicles, and organized it as efficiently as possible. There was great energy in the building – and when clients would come in the door, they felt like business was really humming. We simply couldn't fit anything else in there, and so it was time to find a new office building.

I started looking for more office space – other buildings that we could invest in as a company. Coming from the real estate industry, we all agreed that renting space was a bit like burning money, and we preferred to invest instead in something we could own.

My mind and heart were set on expansion. I envisioned opening one office after another all over the country, and maybe even in other countries over time. It felt like my calling – building this company as quickly as possible.

I invested much of my monthly income back into the company with the goal of building it up to the point where I could be earning the same kind of money as my two partners were already earning. I thought that I could reach that point after a couple of years of intensive work and sacrifice.

If I was investing, buying and fixing properties and selling them, originating loans, taking listings, selling real estate, it was just a job, but if I could employ others to do that, and manage them, it was a business – and that's worth a lot more.

*“Wealth, like happiness, is never attained when sought after directly.
It comes as a by-product of providing a useful service.*

If money is your hope for independence you will never have it. The only real security that a man will have in this world is a reserve of knowledge, experience, and ability.

A business absolutely devoted to service will have only one worry about profits. They will be embarrassingly large.”

~ Henry Ford

We weren't able to purchase a big office building outright, so the challenge was to find a creative way to solve the problem. I was looking for between 7,000 and 10,000 square feet. One or two properties looked promising, but they fell through when no agreements could be reached.

I finally found a two-story building in Winter Park that was being used by a financial services group. Their line of business was helping companies boost their stock values when they went public. Sometimes they would sell off those stocks at a profit soon afterwards, causing the stock values to plummet again. The SEC had come down on them for doing this kind of thing, and so they had reduced in size tremendously, and now occupied only a fraction of the building.

It was ideal for our purposes because the building had a lot of individual offices, which would help provide a great working environment for our staff. It would boost the levels of productivity and loyalty.

There was no way we could afford to buy the property directly, but I figured out a way to do it that would satisfy everyone's needs. We would do a lease purchase, which meant providing a down-payment with an option to purchase the building. I calculated that we needed to take out a three-year contract, starting with low rent in the beginning. We would occupy the space rent-free for six months, while we renovated and remodeled the building. Most of the second floor was completely empty, and there was plenty of space to expand.

The current owners needed an infusion of cash into their business, so the \$60,000 down-payment suited them perfectly. They also got to occupy the building at no additional cost while we were doing renovations. Every penny that we paid in rent got credited towards the purchase price along with our down payment and money we invested in renovations. We had a six-month window of opportunity to expand the business in the meantime rent-free.

I increased our advertising budget, in order to keep providing leads to our agents. It was cost-efficient because we were making good margins on each sale. Just one sale on a \$300,000 house could earn the company up to \$20,000 on the real estate and mortgage commissions combined.

After about six months the financial company moved out of the building. In 2004 the three-year lease agreement ran out.

In the interim we had bought an adjacent property, which had a huge back yard, to provide more space for parking. We leased out the building on that property to Paul's Title Company. It was a mutually beneficial arrangement, where he benefited from the business we sent over, and we benefited from keeping it all in-house. It also helped to smooth over some of the partnership disputes we were having, and changed the balance of power into a more harmonious one.

Business was booming, and clients coming to the new offices were impressed. It was an attractive building, and there was a lot going on. We had appealing signs on the road front, and had turned the entire area into a first-class operation. There were always people in the lobby, and the phones were constantly ringing.

After a few months, though, I noticed that we had fewer leads coming in. It didn't make any sense, because we were spending more on advertising, but the numbers weren't adding up. Spending on advertising was going up, but the leads coming in were decreasing.

As it turns out, there was an interesting story behind it all.

Karma – Reaping What You Sow

“A man should be upright, not be kept upright.”

~ Marcus Aurelius

When I first conceived of the idea of moving to television with my advertising, the idea had been sparked by an infomercial from another real estate company. Their advertisement was aimed at a lower market niche than ours.

When word got out that we were also going to do an infomercial, Nick, the owner of the rival company called me and arranged a meeting to discuss it. At the meeting he told my VP, Andy and I that he thought what we were doing was unethical. To add insult to injury, one of the people in his infomercial was married to someone who had come to work for us as a loan processor.

I explained to him that our market segments didn't really compete with each other, and besides, it's a free market. McDonalds freely competes against Burger King, Wendy's, etc., using the same media, and there's nothing unethical about it. There's plenty of business out there – enough for all of us. Our average sales prices put us into a higher socio-economic target group anyway. We ended it there, and for years I heard nothing more about the matter.

One day a man came into our office, wanting to talk to me. My receptionist listened to what he had to say, and then immediately came to me.

“You need to listen to what this guy has to say.” She told me.

The man explained that he worked for Nick's company, and had some sensitive information to share. He showed me some messages, in which Nick was bragging that he had ‘someone on the inside’ of

the messaging service we used to answer our phone calls when the office was closed, helping him to steal our leads. Calls that were destined to come through to my company were being hijacked by the message service, and his sales team would intercept them. They would then lie, explaining to the clients that they worked in association with us, taking calls that our company was too busy to handle

The incoming phone calls went to a call center that was staffed by people who answered the phones and followed the script on their computer screen to get the customers information, and messages were then transferred to a paging system, which my own agents would respond to. Somehow Nick had managed to find a way to divert those messages. He'd probably paid somebody off at the answering service to take our leads, and pass them on, and then to remove all the evidence of what had been done. That explained why we weren't getting hardly any leads from our advertising.

I immediately changed our answering service to another company, and sales leads started coming in again. Unfortunately the process followed a 120-day cycle, and so that meant three months of extremely low income for our company. Those potential sales were lost forever, and there was no way to get them back.

I spoke to my sales rep, sales manager and director of sales at the TV station about it, and as it turned out, they all knew about Nick – who had the nasty habit of not paying his bills. He had a bad name all over town, and was known all over for unscrupulous business dealings. The station graciously offered to let us pay off the past three months of TV advertising over the next six months, to help make up for the losses we suffered. When I investigated what further steps could be taken, legally, I was advised that the legal fees would outweigh the possible gains. So I left it at that, chalking it up to yet another lesson in business.

I've always felt a kind of protective energy around me in life, shielding me from possible catastrophes, and this was one of those instances. This man who came to see me had no reason to help me, except that he didn't like the way that Nick was doing business. He knew we were spending tens of thousands of dollars on advertising, and that Nick was stealing our clients and lying to them. He couldn't live with that.

I firmly believe that you reap whatever you sow in life. As it turned out, Nick's karmic debt ended up being paid in the most horrific way.

The man who had been in Nick's infomercial, and whose wife worked for us as a loan officer, knew him personally. One day Nick asked to borrow their pickup truck to take a boat down to the Florida Keys. He left his own car with them, and took their truck.

A week later he called to let them know that he was still up in central Florida, which seemed a little odd, but they let it go. A few days after he called, a Sheriff's Deputy knocked on their front door late one night, asking about their truck. My loan processor answered the door and the deputy asked where her husband was. She said he was there at home with her and at that moment he came to the door also.

"The truck has been involved in an accident, and there was a fatality." The Deputy told them.

Nick had been driving down a dark road at night, when he had to swerve to avoid hitting a girl on a bicycle. The truck smashed into a pole that was holding up telephone and power lines. The impact shifted the engine right into the cab, pinning him into the driver's seat, and rupturing the fuel tank. Sparks from the damaged power lines ignited the fuel that was leaking out, and soon the entire truck was engulfed in flames. Onlookers stood by helplessly, unable to free the trapped and screaming man from the furiously burning truck. There was nothing they could do as the fire grew more and more

intense. They could only stand by and watch as he slowly burned to death in front of them screaming, “get me out!” the whole time.

It was a horrible way to go, and I don’t wish it on anybody, but in a way, it illustrates the kinds of things that happen if you fuck people over all your life. It was as if his karma had finally caught up with him.

All of us reap what we sow, in life and in business, so the best way to lead your life is with integrity and positivity. Doing something that benefits you in the short term, but hurts someone else, will come full circle, and get back to you eventually.

Business Continues to Grow

During 2001 and 2002 the business was constantly growing, and improving, continuing to follow a steady upward curve.

I had a clear vision for our office space, and the reality was at last starting to look like the picture I had in my mind's eye.

We filled up the first floor, and moved all of the administrative assistants up to the second floor. We installed cubicles into a big section, and all our loan processors worked up there. My partner, Paul moved his Title Company next door, because the adjacent properties were zoned for both residential and commercial. We put crushed concrete rocks and security lights in the parking area, and for the time being, things were going swimmingly.

There were still issues with the partnership, though.

James was actually a musician at heart, and his true passion was playing the guitar, and performing. He had started a guitar store business, and so it meant that his loyalties were torn between the music business and ours. He often had to spend time tending to his side business.

One time he employed a store manager who just happened to be an alcoholic. James got the call to get out to the shop as quickly as he could, and when he got there, he discovered that his manager had thrown up all over the desk, and then proceeded to pass out. James had to run the store by himself until he found another manager to take over.

As with any undertaking, there are always things that you feel you could have done differently in hindsight. On the whole, though, it was a positive time for our company.

One mistake that I made, admittedly, was failing to put away enough money for a rainy day. I was reinvesting much of my earnings back into the business, hoping to reach my long-term goal more quickly.

You should always pay yourself first, because your business can eat all of your money. It has been said that you should always put away 20% of your income, and let that money work for you while you sleep. It's a wise financial strategy that helps in case of hard times. It also helps you prepare for retirement.

When I started my first solo project, I had no money, so I borrowed \$50,000 on my credit cards. As one project after the next began to pay off, I slowly accumulated some capital, but I kept investing my money back into property. I would continually leverage that money to keep building up my company. After that I entered the partnership agreement, and started investing in our new office building.

The deal on the office building was a windfall, at least. In essence with our lease-purchase agreement, we financed the property interest free for three years, because all of the money we spent was going towards the purchase price. We were building equity in that piece of real estate, which would be like a safety net should we ever decide to go our separate ways. We all knew, somewhere in the back of our minds, that it was a real possibility.

In my mind I had an idea of what I wanted to achieve in the future. My strategy was to suffer financially for the next two or three years, building up my revenue in the business, until I was able to step away from doing transactions altogether, and just run the business. After that I would be able to live off the cumulative income generated from all my loan officers and staff members, and all I would have to do was manage people.

For the next two years I concentrated on doing exactly that – building up the business. I gradually started filling up my bank account again,

and putting away a nest egg for retirement. I was also putting the maximum amount into my retirement account.

By the time 2004 rolled around, the company was booming, and we were starting to feel the effects of a tremendous acceleration in the property market.

The Property Market Bubble

“All of the perplexities, confusion, and distress in America arise, not from the defects in their Constitution or Confederation, not from want of honor or virtue, so much as downright ignorance of the nature of coin, credit, and circulation.”

~ John Adams

I started noticing some big changes that year. Everywhere I looked – it suddenly seemed to me – everyone wanted to get in on the real estate boom.

Things were really beginning to heat up in the real estate market. I didn't realize what was going on at the time, but it was the start of something big. Since then I've learned much more about the economy, banking system, how our monetary system works and why things happen the way they do, but at the time I was clueless.

To me it just seemed as if suddenly everybody wanted to buy property.

There were plenty of ads on TV urging people to invest in property, as soon as possible, adding more fuel to the fire. Our company capitalized on it too, using slogans like “Real Estate is a moving train, get on it now!”

At the same time, it seemed as if it was becoming insanely easy for buyers to qualify for loans. We probably originated half a billion dollars in so-called ‘non-conforming’ property loans over those years. Financial institutions were handing them out left, right and center.

My partners and I had all gotten into real estate at the time that the last few of the RTC (Resolution Trust Corporation) properties were going up for grabs in the US. This was still a residual effect from the previous financial crisis in real estate.

The so-called ‘Savings and Loan Crisis’ from 1986 to 1995 had been a financial collapse of one third of the more than 3,000 savings and loan associations in the United States. It was devastating. A lot of money was lost.

The Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC) closed 296 financial institutions from 1986 to 1989 and the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC) closed or otherwise resolved 747 institutions from 1989 to 1995.

As a result, a lot of properties had been foreclosed, and auctioned off to the highest bidder. My partners and I had all speculated on the foreclosure properties that were still available at the tail end of that cycle.

I once bought one of those homes, a three-bedroom unit, valued at \$45,000 in fixed-up like-new condition, and I paid less than \$10,000 for it. After fixing it up, I made a decent profit on it. This was the same house I sold to the woman who worked in the prison system – the one whose bluff I had to call during negotiation.

We should have known better, knowing how things had turned out before, but we had no idea of the shit storm that was about to arrive in the property market, and the economy in general.

But the storm was brewing.

It was normal for us to get hundreds of mortgage company rate sheets and loan programs through an automated fax-to-email system, linked to every computer on our office network. The numbers were changing, though. Browsing through the information and rate sheets from new loan companies, I couldn’t believe what I was seeing.

Listed on these tables were the requirements that people had to meet in order to qualify for a home loan, and it was just becoming easier and easier to make the grade. They kept slackening the restrictions to the point where just about anyone could get a loan. I saw tons of liar loans, or No Income No Asset (NINA) loans, and firms advertising credit to those who had literally just recovered from bankruptcy – the very next day, in fact. As long as they were paying their rent on time, it was enough – they could make more debt, no questions asked.

Waitresses, truck drivers or strippers, basically anyone earning a minimal income, even if they only earned cash, could take out a loan, and begin to speculate with property.

I was thinking to myself: “How can the banks be making money on any of these deals? I guess they must know what they’re doing.”

I was in disbelief, but I wasn’t complaining – after all, we weren’t doing anything unethical or illegal. Our company was a licensed mortgage lender, but we were merely brokering, or representing the best available credit terms for our clients wanting to buy properties. We recommended the best financial product to our clients – and there were hundreds to choose from.

We had clients, often with jobs that paid only in cash, as opposed to jobs that issued an official pay slip, clients who were self-employed with lots of bank statement cash-flow, but little net income on their tax returns, or couples where the one making the most money had terrible credit and the one making the least had stellar credit, and all the clients had to do was prove that they had been paying rent in order to get a loan in addition to a good credit score.

It was a seller’s market, so eight months to a year later, when construction on their new house was completed, they could re-sell the property for significant profits. Demand was so high that they could get contracts signed on the properties before construction was even completed.

In the past, when we put in a bid to buy a property, we would usually be the only ones making an offer. Now there were five to ten other bids on the table, all competing for the same property. A typical house that went for \$189,900 would sell again in six months for up to \$300,000.

First time home buyers were at a disadvantage, and it required a lot more work on our part to get the sales through to the final closing. It's hard enough finding a house people really like and want to make an offer on, but we sometimes had to find and make offers on five different homes before getting an offer accepted without getting outbid first. It became like doing five times the amount of work for the same pay.

Little did we all know that it was a game of financial musical chairs. At some point the music was going to stop, and debts were going to come due. Sooner or later it was bound to turn ugly.

It was a hugely inflated credit bubble on a national scale, with money lenders eager to lend money to people who didn't necessarily have the proper means to pay back those loans. It was a disaster just waiting to happen.

That same credit bubble was a big part of the reason for the breakdown of the international financial machinery, leading to the financial crisis in 2007. Analysts and financial experts have gone back and traced the root causes of the worldwide problem back to some fundamental errors in the way governments and banking institutions managed the way credit was created.

The economy is an intricate engine, held together and fueled by many different factors – the most important of which is human nature.

“The economy is like a machine. At the most fundamental level it is a relatively simple machine. But many people don’t understand it – or they don’t agree on how it works – and this has led to a lot of needless economic suffering.”

~ Ray Dalio

Raymond Dalio is an American investor, hedge fund manager and philanthropist. He is the founder of the investment firm, Bridgewater Associates, one of the world's largest hedge funds. He recently published a book titled, “Principles: Life and Work” which is a must read on his life and what he’s learned!

He has a great video on YouTube that explains how the whole system works. You can Google “how the economic machine works by Ray Dalio” – I recommend it to anyone who wants to know more about our banking and credit system.

According to him, there are three fundamental forces that influence the economy:

- Productivity Growth,
- the Short Term Loan Cycle, (5-8 years),
- And the Long Term Loan Cycle. (Decades).

Productivity growth is the most stable – because it depends on an individual’s ability to produce goods, or add value by means of a service. This increases slowly over your lifetime as you gain experience and knowledge, or improve efficiency. By extension, an entire nation’s productivity also grows slowly but steadily.

The other two cycles are more volatile, because lending and borrowing money tends to create cycles – the ‘boom and bust’ cycles.

Central banks create credit out of thin air, and regulate the loan cycles and inflation rates by adjusting the interest rates up or down. Creating credit boosts the amount of spending in the economy at first,

but creating too much credit has long-term repercussions. Artificial inflation of selling prices creates a bubble, and at some point, the bubble ‘busts’.

Credit is the most important part of the economy, and also the least understood by the average Joe. No matter who you are, it pays to understand the machinery of the banking and monetary system. If you make bad decisions with your investments, you’re going to get caught when the cycle swings into the downward or ‘bust’ phase. This is what happened to my parents in 1987 during the stock market crash.

Basically the entire economy works by going through swings – highs and lows, which are regulated by the central banks and policy makers.

Lenders and borrowers transact on the market – each getting something out of the deal. The lender earns interest, and the borrower gets to buy something that he couldn’t otherwise afford. In its simplest form, in theory, there’s no danger in that. But unless it’s properly regulated, it can be extremely dangerous.

When the cycles get too far out of control, a lot of people lose a lot of money, and civil unrest could follow. The gulf widens between the rich and the poor, and desperate people become ripe targets for political reformers. This is exactly what happened in pre-war Germany when Adolf Hitler came to power.

To explain it a little more clearly, think of it this way:

Banks encourage people to borrow money, and the economy benefits, at least for a while. This is because increased borrowing leads to increased spending (all that borrowed money gets spent), which in turn drives increased income further down the line (for the people who earn an income from all that extra spending). It’s meant to be a positively reinforcing cycle, to boost the overall economy.

But there's a catch. Any time you borrow money, you're automatically creating a cycle. Sometime in the future you are going to have to pay that debt back.

Credit creates an artificially inflated idea of wealth, and it's human nature to want to spend more in the short-term than what you can realistically afford to pay back in the long-term. When interest rates climb, and the debt repayment schedule increases, people get into trouble, and the wheels start to come off. Suddenly they aren't earning enough to repay their debts.

The total amount of Credit in the US is about \$50 Trillion. The total amount of actual money is only about \$3 trillion. The reason for most of this staggering amount of credit is over-consumption – buying things that we don't actually need, and simultaneously overestimating our own ability to pay back our debts. It's like a social disease – we define ourselves by means of a lifestyle, chasing things that we don't need, and don't necessarily even want.

Credit can be a good thing – for example, if you buy a tractor on credit in order to harvest more crops, you can increase your income, and pay back the debt with all that extra income.

Credit can also be a very bad thing – for example if you buy a big screen TV that you can't actually afford on your pay grade, but you just have to have it, so you overextend.

The overall problem runs even deeper. The way our banking system works is that the money you borrow to buy a house is basically created out of thin air the moment you sign the contract.

Fractional reserve banking is a system where only a fraction of bank deposits are backed by actual cash on hand and are available for withdrawal. Banks don't actually have all the money on hand that they lend out. Depending on the Reserve Rate, they may only have 10-15% of the money on hand. There are systems in place to regulate

the Central Bank and the Reserve Banks, theoretically controlled by increasing or decreasing the prime lending rate, and the reserve rate.

This type of banking is done to expand the economy by freeing up capital that can be loaned out to other parties. When inflation gets out of hand, the banks regulate the flow of credit in the opposite direction – making it harder, and more expensive to borrow money – in order to counteract inflation. This is the downward cycle, also known as *deflation*.

Many of the loans that were in circulation at the time all of this started to happen, had a fixed interest rate for the first year, or first three years. After that the interest rates could change, dependent on the Federal Reserve Bank.

In 2005, when it started to become clear that a huge artificial wealth bubble was developing in the property market, the rates were increased to try to slow it all down, and avoid disaster. Those in control of the system tried to put the brakes on, but it was already too late.

When the Fed started raising the interest rate, all loans were affected. The London Interbank Offered Rate (Libor) and all the others went up as a result – all of them are linked together in a chain.

Monthly repayments increased dramatically over a short space of time, and suddenly people couldn't afford to refinance their properties or make their mortgage payments once they started adjusting upward along with the prime and Libor rate.

Now we were seeing people, who couldn't really verify their income to start with, suddenly stuck with three or four properties that they simply couldn't afford to pay off anymore. At the same time, the demand for properties was starting to tank – nobody wanted to invest anymore. It was the inevitable chain reaction, and the start of the 'bust' cycle.

A lot of people had to walk away from their properties, and the number of property foreclosures went through the roof.

Loan portfolios which were supposedly “AAA” rated were going bad all over the country. When it’s a small percentage of total loans going bad, banks can absorb the effects. When it happens on a massive scale, banks start to go belly-up.

Many U.S. banks were forced to shut down during the Great Depression of 1929-1941, because too many people attempted to withdraw their assets at the same time. The ‘bust’ cycle got way out of control. At that point spending decreases, banks raise interest rates, and assets begin to lose all their value.

The cycle repeated itself again during the 2007-2008 world financial meltdown, and it’s precisely why so many people were affected during the crisis.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is an independent agency created by the U.S. Congress. It’s supposed to be a safety net, and it’s meant to maintain stability and public confidence in the banking industry. It’s supposed to bail out the banks in times of trouble.

What many people didn’t know at the time was that the maximum insurable amount was only \$100,000 for each depositor’s bank account. Anything above that wasn’t insured. Since then, the limit has been increased to \$250,000.

If your bank goes insolvent, that’s the maximum amount of money you’re insured for. This is good to know, if you have a lot of money tied up in the bank.

“The economy is a Ponzi scheme. People are working harder than they ever have for less wages, but we have so many bubbles because

*manufacturing has come up so quickly over the past hundred years
that people have the illusion of wealth.”*

~ Alex Jones

Like most people, at the time, I kept thinking that the economy was healthy, and that things would continue to improve. It was an illusion that was shared by most of the entire nation.

The changes in the market were starting to cause problems for us, especially with first time home buyers. I realized that we would have to adapt our model, and change our advertising. We needed to aim for a higher socio-economic target niche, or we'd end up going out of business.

The scene was set for major changes to occur. I had no idea just how drastic those changes would be – but I could feel something beginning to stir.

As the economy started to nosedive into its final ‘bust’ cycle, I was still quite secure, personally. At least, so I thought. In a lot of ways it was the pinnacle of achievement for me. I was living out my dreams, and our company had grown rapidly. Each year we operated our profits virtually doubled, and it seemed as if it would continue indefinitely.

But the laws of nature, and the laws of life are not so easily anticipated. Nothing continues indefinitely, and everything is subject to change. The extremes of abundance hold within them the seeds of scarcity – to use an analogy from the philosophy of yin and yang.

As the foundations of the real estate market began to shake, I was approaching a time in my career where I was to face the biggest, and most difficult challenges of my life.

Transformation

“Think of yourself as on the threshold of unparalleled success.”

~ Andrew Carnegie

Around this time I was investigating the Tony Robbins website, looking for material to use to train and motivate my staff members. I wanted to invest in my team, and turn them into the sharpest, most empowered people they could be. I got them all to listen to Tony’s *30 Days to Personal Power*, and later the *Get the Edge* programs.

Along the way I discovered that the great things I had learned before finishing college, were only the tip of the Tony Robbins iceberg. I found material on living a healthy lifestyle, managing time, and much more besides. I bought everything I could find – and so my name ended up on their marketing lists.

Sometime later I got a call from a salesperson, asking if I wanted an accredited trainer to come and speak to the company. I thought it was a great idea, and we set it up.

He came over and talked to the team, and offered a promotional discount if a bunch of us signed up to go to an upcoming conference. The company sponsored part of the cost. I thought it was a great way to get people on board, and motivated, and to help them develop personally. Besides, I wanted to go too.

It felt like universal forces were converging, shaping my destiny, and preparing me for a major life transformation in the near future. Change was in the air, and it was time to meet the next challenge with an open mind, and a willing heart.

As the old saying goes:

“Life is what happens when you’re busy making other plans.”

While I was busy making other plans for my successful future, life was happening, whether I knew it or not.

We attended the *Unleash the Power Within* (UPW) event in January 2004. During the last day of the event Tony talked about further avenues for learning, including the *Date with Destiny* event, *Wealth Mastery*, and *Life Mastery*. For the top echelon of attendees, all the most ambitious achievers, he offered a chance to join the Platinum Partnership, modeled after his Scorpion Club. He went on to explain the benefits of joining.

You get the opportunity to go on exclusive trips, where you get to hang out with Tony and his wife, and some of his best trainers and friends, at exotic five-star locations all over the world. Each trip has a different theme, and you get to spend time with the top people in the business world, the most successful and wealthiest – the crème-de-la-crème, so to speak.

“Be with those who help your being.”

~ Rumi

These people are all growth-oriented, spiritually minded, and on the same wavelength in terms of how they think. They’re passionate about becoming the best possible versions of themselves, and serious about growth and success both in business, and in their personal lives. It’s an inspirational peer group. I attended the exclusive presentation, and made up my mind to join straight away.

Two weeks later I was on a plane to Jackson Hole Wyoming to attend the first event on the schedule.

The admission fee was \$65,000, at the time, and the trips cost anywhere from \$6,000 to \$15,000 each. As a member you can attend any Tony Robbins event at no extra charge. When I joined, I

benefited immensely from the experience, and met some remarkable people. If you can afford it, I highly recommend it to anyone who is interested in growing as a person. It can become a real springboard for success.

“We become what we think about all day long.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Choosing to associate with successful people is essential, if you want to become more successful yourself. Two of my favorite Tony Robbins quotes, ones that have stuck with me over the years, and shaped my ideas spring to mind:

“The Quality of your life is in direct proportion to the expectations of your peer group.”

“The Quality of your life is in direct proportion to the people who you consistently spend your time with.”

~ Tony Robbins

What I noticed when I started spending time with these people is that they all seemed to have a different sort of look in their eyes. They seemed to project an air of spirituality, focus, and determination. It was a privilege to meet such a high-level group of people, and it had a tremendously positive effect on me.

I was attending the event to improve myself, and to improve my business. I learned a lot during those sessions, and I met people that could help my career, and help grow my business. I wasn't expecting to go beyond that.

I was probably the last person to realize it, but what I was really doing there was trying to find my authentic self.

During this first, exclusive event, I got to see Tony do a personal intervention with one of the female Platinum Partner members. I mentioned it in the introduction, but it was such a key event, that I want to go into more detail here. I watched Tony transform this woman's life – her whole way of thinking – in a matter of minutes. He pointed out to her how she was continually sabotaging herself through her self-talk. He talked her out of it, and got her to see things in a completely new way. The effect was powerful, and you could see a visible change in the woman once they were done talking.

I thought that it was the coolest thing I had seen in my life, and in that instant, I thought to myself: "I want to learn how to do that!"

Even though I didn't fully understand what had happened at the time, my heart started pulling me in an entirely new direction. My inner world was going to become aligned to a new set of goals – to a completely new destiny. The seed had been planted.

It was also on this trip that I met Pedro, who spoke about his innovative way of advertising – and 'sold' it to me. I have to admit, I made the rookie mistake of suspending my skepticism, because I was so overawed by this amazing group of people I now found myself spending time with. It was "Tony World," and carried away by it all, I fell into a trap that I would normally have avoided quite easily under normal circumstances.

I imagined that it was synchronicity, the law of attraction at work. The universe was lining everything up perfectly, and so I signed Pedro on to implement the advertising system in our business.

It was high time to shoot a new infomercial anyway, and I thought it was a good idea to change direction, instead of repeating the same old advertisements over again. We used to refresh our infomercials once a year, but as I mentioned, the business landscape was changing.

I firmly believed that his system would attract the kinds of buyers we were looking for. Just like most of my business decisions until then, I firmly believed it would work out, and deliver results. I had no doubts whatsoever.

Success isn't always the best teacher. We all tend to learn far more from making mistakes. This was one of them.

Up until this point in my life, at least, ever since I was a teenager, things had been pretty easy for me. There were problems and troubles at home and at school and college, of course, but financially I had been on an upward trajectory all along.

I didn't take out a huge salary from the business, because I was reinvesting so heavily. Even so, every year our revenue had doubled. At 34 years old I had known nothing but advancement, growth and success. I was always earning more money; I was always progressing, improving, or getting better opportunities. I felt like I could do no wrong.

Pride cometh before the fall, as they say, and I had become guilty of hubris and pride.

I was used to dealing with people trying to tell me what I should and shouldn't do – and I was used to proving them wrong. My business partners often doubted me, but time and time again I would prove them wrong. When things did work out, as I never doubted they would, the two of them would have to concede that I had been right. The rep from Fox 35 used to jokingly call me “boy wonder” and “boy genius.”

I was starting to believe that I was infallible, and invincible. Of course, I wasn't – and life was about to come and beat me down like a fucking piñata. I was about to get the shit kicked out of me, and get handed a huge slice of humble pie.

Following Your True Calling

“Everyone has been made for some particular work, and the desire for that work has been put in every heart.”

~ Rumi

After getting to spend time with such an awesome and inspiring group of people, many of them far wealthier than me – the Platinum Partners – it was quite a letdown to come back to the office and butt heads with my business partners again.

There is a lesson that comes out of any difficulty in life, and the one that shines through here is this:

Always try to follow your dreams and your passion – if you give up on them, you start to die inside.

I was always telling James to follow his heart, to follow his dream and his true passion, and go into music full time. He never really took the advice, but stuck it out in a job that he wasn't really cut out for. As a result, resentment, jealousy, frustration and anger began to grow inside him.

His mindset always gravitated towards angry confrontation, and he always assumed the worst in most situations. He liked being the center of attention, like when he was on stage with his guitar, and he resented the fact that I was the one who appeared on the Television ads. To him, this was a personal insult.

James told me stories about how he'd grown up, and his problems at home went a long way towards explaining his behavior. I firmly believe, though, that a big part, if not the root cause of all of this was that James wasn't truly following his purpose, and his passion in life.

He was working with us purely for money, and selling out on his real dream. In addition to that, his wife was always trying to sandbag his music career, and so he was in a constant state of turmoil.

One day James walked into the office and overheard our new receptionist talking on the phone. I had delegated the job of hiring receptionists to the lady who ran the processing department – and she was pretty good at it. The brand new receptionist, however, was discussing our company with a client, and answering questions about who owned the business.

“Yes, this is Corey’s business. Uh huh. No, he doesn’t have any partners. Yes, he owns the office building also.” She was saying.

James overheard all of this, and immediately jumped to the conclusion that I had told the receptionist to say that. He didn’t know the facts of the matter, though. She had only been with us for a day or two, I didn’t even know her name yet, and had hardly spoken a word to her. James stormed into my office, with a scowl, and an angry, red face, and launched into a tirade.

“Hey man – you’re not the king around here!” He shouted at me, and told me what he had just overheard.

I tried to calmly explain that I hardly knew the new employee, and that obviously she needed more training, but James was convinced that I was scheming behind his back, trying to steal the limelight. He imagined that I was secretly convincing people that I was the only reason that our company was successful. In his mind it was war.

The truth of it was that I didn’t brag about the fact that my division was the most successful part of the company, and that my division employed 80% of all the staff members. I didn’t remind him that it was my structuring of our lease agreement that had secured our new offices, and allowed us to invest in the building. Our accountants, when reviewing the income figures over the past few years, could plainly see which division was performing the best. In fact they had

mentioned it to me in so many words. But I didn't feel the need to harp on about it – because I didn't feel threatened, and I was doing what I was doing because it was my choice, and it was about more than just money.

James felt threatened. He was constantly tense because he simply wasn't aligned with his true path in life. He hated not being the center of attention. More than once I suggested that he concentrate on his music store, even offering to hire someone to do his work, while he still profited from his share in the business. Really, I wanted him to be successful and happy. I felt there was no reason for petty arguments.

After several years he eventually ended up closing his music store, and giving up on the whole idea. He wasn't willing to suffer, to endure to the end, or to put his heart into it. Instead, he compromised by working in our company, and all the negativity and resentment just kept building up. It found its only expression in constant confrontations with his partners and other people.

When you're truly passionate about your business, when it's your life's blood, when you're in love with what you do – there is no obstacle that you can't overcome, no matter how many times you have to start over.

When you're doing something just to make money, or because you feel it's expected of you, or because it's 'reasonable,' you can never have the same drive and enthusiasm. It's just too easy to quit when things get tough. You'll have no reason to stretch yourself, no desire to excel, and you will experience no real joy in working every day. It's simply a painful series of chores that need to be done. A lot of people go through this kind of thing because they believe that there simply isn't any other alternative. They settle for second best, and never get to taste the exhilaration and fear of following a dream.

It's different when you can't imagine doing anything else besides what you're actually doing in life. If nothing else will bring you as much joy, as much fulfillment, and as much passion as what you've chosen to do – work no longer feels like work. If what you do makes you feel alive, and every day you get out of bed enthusiastic and motivated – your whole life takes on a new dimension. You live an inspired life.

The word “inspiration” has interesting roots. From the Latin *inspirare*, it literally means to “blow into, or breathe upon,” and it was often used in a spiritual sense. The word ‘spirit’ is in there, which also used to be equated with the breath. The two words were interchangeable.

For example, it was used in the Latin translation of the Bible in Genesis 2:7

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

To be inspired means to feel the breath of spirit infusing your life. The spirit of life, of energy, of creativity and joy infuses every action in your life – so long as you're following your true path. When you're doing what you feel you were meant to do, everything just feels right, and everything starts falling into place.

“If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.”

~ Gospel of Thomas

To me, that quote is all about following your heart, and your calling. You need to be inspired, “in the spirit,” or have the breath of spirit infusing your activities every day. If you're constantly doing a job

you really hate, or if you're just doing what you think others expect from you, it's going to destroy you eventually.

Victor Frankl hit the nail on the head in his book *Mans Search for Meaning*. It's an uplifting classic, and in the book he describes his experiences during his time in a Nazi concentration camp during WWII.

He came to realize that a person's sense of *meaning* is tied up with the will to live. When people had hope, when they felt that their life still had meaning and purpose, they had the will to live, even amidst the horrors of those death camps. As soon as that disappeared, they were dead within a day or two. Frankl made the choice to survive those horrific conditions, come what may, in order to tell the story of what happened to him and his family. He was lucky enough, and tenacious enough to survive, and in later years he stayed true to his purpose.

Amidst those dark surroundings he found meaning in the most unlikely places. For example, instead of getting real food, the camp wardens would serve them boiled water with a dead fish head floating in it. There was basically no nutritional value in that dish, but Frankl chose to concentrate on the beauty he saw, even if it was just a fish head floating in the water. He found hope, and a reason to feel grateful, because he would survive another day. He never lost hope, and he never gave up on his vision. That's ultimately what helped him survive, and get through the ordeal.

Many people give up hope in life in their late twenties or early thirties. The responsibilities and realities of life weigh so heavily on them that they start to lose hope. They get married and have kids, and get stuck in the grind and the groove and the rut of earning a living. They're surrounded by people who tell them they need to be realistic. They're told to give up on their unrealistic, idealistic ideas, and buckle down to reality.

They feel stuck – as if they can never get out of that situation, and do what they really want to do.

To do that would be ‘irresponsible.’

“That’s only for the lucky ones, the ones with rich parents, or higher incomes, the connections or the abilities” – or worst of all – “you’re too old.” The story and excuses they tell themselves is, “I don’t have the time... my tennis elbow needs to be fixed first... my back is messed up... I’m too busy... I don’t have the money... I need to get my meds right... It’s too much work... next year... next month... after the kids are gone... I have to lose weight first... once I sell my car... etc.

You’re never too old to become the person you’re meant to be.

As soon as you start to feel that you’re making progress towards your true goals – that very feeling is success. That’s what makes you feel alive, inspired and happy.

“This turning deeply towards what you love, saves you.”

~ Rumi

If you can consistently take small, incremental steps over the course of many days, weeks, months, years and decades, you find yourself on the path you’re meant to be traveling.

That’s why it’s so important to keep working at it steadily, to keep moving forward, even if it’s only one tiny step at a time. Break things down into small, achievable daily goals, and keep chipping away. Eventually the beauty of David is revealed from the chunk of rock.

This is something I learned from the experiences I was going through at the time.

I would come back from a Platinum Partner event, where I had been surrounded by such inspiring people. They all felt a sense of

meaning, of hope, and they were passionate about life. They exuded confidence and charisma, and instead of dragging you down, they inspired you to do better. They lifted me up, and made me want to do better.

Then I would get back to work, my life, and it felt like I was surrounded by energy vampires.

Instead of inspiration, here I found a lot of people who felt no sense of hope, no sense of joy in life, and no enthusiasm for work. They merely did what they felt they had to – or what their boss expected. It was draining. I could clearly see that this was because people were not aligning their daily goals, or their lives, to their true calling. I needed to put up with a lot of those people, because they were needed in the company, but if I had the choice, I wouldn't want to.

The only way I could resolve the tension with my partners was to step away, back down, and avoid the confrontation. I constantly had to say: "I'm sorry, you're right, I'm wrong, it's all my fault."

I didn't truly feel that way – but this was the only way to get anywhere, and get on with business. James would walk away proudly, feeling like the dominant "silverback" male, thinking he'd won the match. He always resented the fact that my division was more successful than his and that I was the one on TV, not him. He used to say to me that I had all the 'fame and notoriety' from appearing in those silly infomercials.

I didn't see it that way. For me, it was purely a way to grow the business, and ego didn't factor into it. There were some side benefits, I will admit, especially where it came to dating women. At one trade show, for example, a woman came up to me and said:

"Whenever your TV show comes on, I play with myself."

It was flattering, in a way, but mostly it was just amusing. She was kind of cute, but I didn't feel the attraction, or feel the desire to hook up, so I just dismissed the whole thing graciously.

"Thanks for sharing – I'm glad I could be of assistance, getting you off there in your living room. Have a great day."

But James held on to these kinds of things, mulling over the jealousy and resentment, ruminating on the negativity.

I recognized what the cause of his anger was – and it's always the same with any kind of anger. At the bottom of all kinds of aggression and hatred there is always *fear*.

In this case it was his fear of not being recognized, the fear of losing something, the fear of feeling small and insignificant. It's the ego that fears injury or attack, and so it reacts the only way it knows how. That fear is expressed as resistance to life, and comes out as anger, hatred and violence.

As time went on, matters only got worse. He became more and more belligerent and aggressive. One day James was upset about something or other, and he confronted me in the hallway. His face was inches away from mine, and he was yelling at the top of his lungs. The office doors were open, and everyone in the office stopped working to take in the show. Within moments everyone was gawking at the two of us having a showdown in the hallway. It was embarrassing – here was a man twice my age, acting childishly in front of everyone, making a scene.

I knew that he had just lost his guitar business, along with a lot of money, and that was part of the reason for his behavior. I knew how he loved that business, and I knew he was unhappy here. I knew he had issues growing up. Even so, it was no reason to feel as if every decision I made was a personal insult, or a blow to his manhood. That just betrayed his lack of maturity. He was an angry, unhappy, frustrated bully.

I managed to get him into a private office, and calm him down, but I knew that this was not the kind of environment in which I wanted to continue working. These people were not inspiring – they were bringing me down.

I had invested a lot into the company, into my dream and into my goals for success, but I was now at the point where I was beginning to feel the need for a change. My heart was already going in another direction, and I was growing tired of this routine.

The Body Language of Success

“A superior doctor prevents sickness; a mediocre doctor attends to impending sickness; an inferior doctor treats sickness.”

~ Chinese Proverb

That summer I went on a Platinum Partner event at the Laguna Seca Raceway in Carmel, California. During the event we attended racecar school, learning about the open-wheel racing cars we would be taking around the track.

A really great lesson that came out of it was this:

Keep your eyes on your intended trajectory in life. In other words: Always look forwards, down the track to where you’re intending to go.

When you’re in a racecar, and you start to lose control, your natural inclination is to look at the wall that you’re about to hit, but want to avoid hitting it – but doing so will naturally tend to cause you to steer the car further in that direction, and increase the likelihood of a crash. The thing that you fear might happen exerts a kind of magnetic force on you, subconsciously, and you end up doing it.

*What you fear in life is what you will attract,
but what you look at will disappear.*

What the instructors teach you is to focus instead on the line you’re intending to follow – back along the racetrack. They will actually physically turn your head in that direction, if you start to slip out of control while you’re on the track. Without realizing it, you will start to naturally correct your course, and avoid a crash.

It's a powerful metaphor for life. Wherever you set your sights is where life will tend to pull you – just like steering that racecar.

If you're constantly thinking about the things that you fear, you start to attract those things into your life. When something shitty happens in your life, the natural tendency is to start freaking out, imagining all the things that could go wrong, or all the things you want to avoid. The stress and fear drives you into the wrong path – into making the wrong choices.

Human beings have two basic, primary fears: The first is the fear of not being good enough, of not being worthy. The second is the fear of not being loved. These fears get in the way of everything we do.

Ships are safe in the harbor, but they weren't built to stay there. They were built to travel the seas. You can never stop evolving and growing.

I talk about this in my first book, in the context of relationships. Guys who want to build a relationship have to avoid the fear of rejection, and obsessing about what might go wrong. If they do that, they usually start calling too often, and putting too much pressure on the woman they want to attract. They over-compensate, trying too hard, doing too much, and basically end up making themselves look weak. Women sense this, and start pushing the guy away. The more they push away, the more the fear grows, and the harder he tries. It always ends badly. Within days she starts refusing to take his calls, and ghosts his ass.

It's so important to keep your eyes fixed on your goals – the things that turn you on, the things that inspire you, instead of the things that you fear.

You have to focus on the outcome, and you need emotionally compelling reasons – a strong “why” to achieve those outcomes. If you're not totally committed, if you're not absolutely in love with it, you won't stick with it.

When you take action, you need to pay attention to the results of those actions. You need to notice both the good and the bad results – or outcomes – from everything you set out to do. This way you’re constantly learning and improving. Whether you succeed or whether you fail, keep asking yourself the following questions:

- What are the benefits here?
- What did I just learn from this?
- How can I do better next time?
- What do these minor failures teach me?
- What do these minor successes teach me?
- How can this help me fine-tune my approach going forward?
- What corrective action should I take?
- What other permutation can I try in the future that could potentially yield better results?

Aligning Your Mind and Body to a Higher Level

During the same program I noticed a man with a portable chiropractic table working on Tony while he took a break between talking sessions.

As I watched, I became intrigued. The practitioner wasn't really applying pressure, or massage, like a traditional chiropractor; in fact, he was hardly touching Tony at all, making only light contact along the spine. As he did so, Tony's body started moving in a wavelike pattern, spontaneously. It was fascinating to watch – I'd never seen anything like it before.

Later the doctor came to sit next to me, and I leaned over and asked him about what I had seen. He told me that his name was Dr. Donald ("Donny") Epstein, and what he had been doing was called Network Spinal Analysis (NSA).

He explained that he had developed his unique system after studying various medical approaches to spinal treatments, as well as a number of more spiritual practices. His system is a combination – or Network – of these complimentary approaches.

Dr. Epstein believes that the spine is integral to our experience of life and it's where we tend to lock up and hold on to emotional trauma, fears and negativity. By releasing the tension, you are able to make changes in your mental and emotional capacity, besides releasing muscle tension. You're able to facilitate major changes in your life.

He described the subtle connection between parts of the brain and the spine, and by extension, the entire body. When this connection is open, and strong, it allows a person to express 'their higher level of humanity, and to feel more compassion and love.'

He calls these 'higher end social changes', because there are spiritual connotations involved. Every individual is different in the way they

relate to others and their environment, and the key to his system is allowing the body to regulate that tension in a natural, spontaneous way.

I've included some excerpts below quoted from an interview with Dr. Epstein in *positivehealth.com* in 2005 to better explain how it works.

“To understand the 'mechanics' of NSA, we must first remind ourselves that the spine is composed of bones sitting on top of each other with discs or pads in-between. These bones or vertebrae have holes like donuts in them. These holes create a spinal canal for the spinal cord, which extends from the base of the brain to the tailbone. The central nervous system comprises the brain and the spinal cord, and is supported by an intricate system of tissues.

We perceive our entire world through the nervous system. It is also through the nervous system that we coordinate the function of every cell, organ and tissue in the body. Every region of the body and every emotion is expressed through the nervous system.

Also, it's the part of us with which we reason and which adapts us to stress and it's the vehicle we use to create our conscious reality.”

In other words, your spine is more than just the thing that holds you up. Your body, and your spine, and your nervous system in particular is intelligent, and it's linked to your mind and to your emotions.

If you continually have a huge amount of muscle tension along your spinal column, you will find it very hard to make changes for the better in your life. Why? Because your nervous system is so out of balance and constantly in a state of stress – you're in the so-called 'fight or flight' state. You experience this kind of thing as feeling unsafe, feeling scared to make any changes that add even more uncertainty to your life.

Basically, network chiropractic care helps your brain find, fix and realign any unbalances, tension and spinal subluxations by

facilitating the dropping of all muscle tension in your nervous system and spinal cord.

When all the muscle tension in your spinal cord goes away, it's easy for your brain to reconnect to all of the parts of your body and vital organs.

When an event occurs that our brain decides is not safe for you to fully experience at that particular time, the energy and information of the event is translated into vibration and tension, which is then stored in the body.

Your spine twists out of alignment, and muscle tension gathers in your back, or your neck. Every part of your spine corresponds to a specific part of your personality, or psyche.

Your belly button area, for example, corresponds to willpower. If you're always talking about what you want to do – but never feel safe enough to actually go out and do it – this area of your spine is most likely involved in the problem.

The area in line with your solar plexus is connected to relationships, and expressing emotions.

I had a lump along my back in that area because of my experiences while I was growing up. I found it hard to express emotions, because my family background didn't make me feel safe expressing myself. As a result I was 'armoring' myself – expressed as muscle tension in that part of my spine. I had built a 'shield' around me, and ironically, instead of protecting me, it was making me feel pain, sickness, and fear.

If the part of your spine around your heart area is locked up, you're going to experience difficulties showing love, compassion, and have relationship difficulties. You will find that you're often self-sabotaging your happiness, and wrecking potentially great relationships.

When something happens to you in life – whether it’s physical trauma or emotional trauma, it gets stored in your body. When it happens over and over again, that part of your spinal cord will become hard, and inflexible. It can feel as if the muscles are as hard as rocks.

“This tension begins to distort the spinal system: Spinal bones (the vertebrae) lose their normal alignment, and muscles and ligaments strain and pull. Nerves can become compressed or stretched and irritated which results in abnormal function. As the nervous system is put under pressure, the spine is no longer able to right itself without outside help.

Our body then 'closes off' the offending energy and tension, but over time, muscular tightness, spinal distortion, reduced breathing into the area occurs and consequently reduced movement results. Until it is safe to experience that energy again, and digest the information from the trauma, we cannot really feel whole or well,” says Dr. Epstein.

As you age, it results in your body structure being fixed in a ‘defense posture.’ Your vertebrae might actually fuse together, where the cartilage actually turns into bone, becoming permanent.

Dr. Epstein says: “In fact, most of us remain in defense mode throughout our lives and this can retard the higher, more evolved area of the brain from developing its unique properties and evolving new strategies for experiencing and responding to life. There are many people whose vertebrae, ligaments and tissues are locked into stress patterns, creating so much tension, that their focus in life is just getting through another day.”

I believe that two of Dr. Epstein’s books are essential reading for anyone who wants to master themselves. They’re titled:

“The Twelve Stages of Healing,” and, *“Healing Myths, Healing Magic.”*

You can find them on Amazon.com, or visit my website UnderstandingRelationships.com and click on the “products” tab. You can also find them on one my website articles by Googling, “Corey Wayne, Death begins in the colon,” and scroll down to the book listings at the bottom of the page.

When you start paying attention to the way people hold themselves up, to their posture, and the way they carry themselves, anyone can see that the body language of success looks very different from the body language of fear and defeat.

“Your Biography becomes your Biology”

~ Caroline Myss.

When you stand tall, shoulders back, and with your spine straight and aligned, it expresses confidence and assurance. When your neck is cranked forward, or your shoulders are hunched, or your back is stooped over – it expresses the opposite.

Some people walk around with a body language that tells you they’re carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders. They’re weighed down and unhappy. Other people express vitality and health, as if they’re able to take on any challenge that life can throw in their way.

Becoming aware of what your body is saying is the key to repairing the mind-body connection, and opening up the ability to heal, and thrive. When your posture is upright and proud, you immediately feel more capable and confident. When you feel depressed, you immediately begin to compress your spine, hunching over, and sagging, looking towards the ground. Over time that physiology starts to become permanent.

My business partner, James, was the perfect example of this. He had a very violent childhood. His father had been a decorated war veteran, but was abusive. Things got so bad in the home as a kid that James decided to shoot his father with a .22 rifle. When the moment

came, his father had quick enough reflexes to avoid getting shot, and he grabbed the gun and swung it at the boy. Luckily the blow never landed, but the force of the blow was enough to wrap the rifle around a post on the porch.

Growing up in an environment like that left a permanent mark on his mind and emotional constitution, and it translated into a permanent ‘defensive’ posture. His entire mind-body system still vibrated with that violent, aggressive energy many decades later.

In fact, all of my business relationships tended to resonate on that kind of stressful, aggressive frequency too. I had built the company in that environment, surrounded by those kinds of people, and when I was in that situation, it rubbed off on me too. The more I learned about it, the more clearly I could see how this was affecting my emotions and my body.

When I spoke to Dr. Epstein, he asked me where I lived, and when I told him, he recommended that I go and see a practitioner there, Dr. Dominick D'Anna. His website is BeSimplyWell.com.

After I got back from racecar school I went to see him.

It changed my life in some fundamental ways. After my first treatment I got into my car, and actually had to readjust my seat completely. The alignment in my spine had begun to change dramatically. I was going for treatments two or three times a week, and the more I went, the more relaxed I became. My whole mindset shifted into a peaceful, harmonious one.

I’ve since become a huge advocate of NSA, and I recommend you find a certified level 3 practitioner in your area by searching on Dr. Epstein’s website, WiseWorldSeminars.com. If you can get regular Network Chiropractic treatments it could change your life.

Body and mind, along with your emotions all work together as a team. As your body drops the muscle tension, you become more

relaxed, and you vibrate on a different frequency – one that attracts harmony and peace into your life, instead of aggression. You naturally want to eat healthier, exercise more, and start eliminating chaotic people and things from your life. You feel drawn to more relaxing music, activities and environments. It happens naturally, without having to force it – you don't have to try to do those things because they're good for you – they just naturally seem more appealing, because you feel more peaceful, relaxed and healthy.

You're going to make your best decisions when you're in a peaceful and healthy state of mind. You do your best work in life when you're completely relaxed.

This is an important piece of wisdom that is affirmed by many successful people, not least of which is the charismatic screen personality – Bill Murray.

You might not know him as a spiritual man, let alone a teacher, but Murray got interested in personal development early on, and was a student of one of the most interesting and charismatic of all the more recent spiritual masters – G.I. Gurdjieff. Through his Paris-based Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, Gurdjieff taught what was known as the *Fourth Way*: the Way of the “Sly Man.” He believed that the Sly Man did not withdraw from everyday life, like a monk, but instead pursued enlightenment while existing amidst the everyday hassles of life.

A big part of that teaching comes down to learning how to relax completely, while still working passionately and actively – without wasting a single drop of energy on stressing, fighting, and struggling. It includes relaxing those core muscles in the spine, and maintaining a relaxed mind, and emotional balance.

In a 2012 interview with The New York Times Bill Murray explained:

“The more relaxed you are, the better you are at everything: the better you are with your loved ones, the better you are with your enemies, the better you are at your job, the better you are with yourself.”

As the NSA treatments continued, I noticed a lot of changes starting to happen in my life. I naturally started rejecting certain kinds of experiences, and booting certain kinds of people out of my life.

Those things that caused me to feel negative and stressed just didn’t seem right anymore. Being around my business partners was like fingernails on the chalkboard. I started thinking of how I could change things, and surround myself with an environment that suited my new, peaceful mindset.

I started letting go of some of the toxic people in my life. One example was Andy, who I mentioned earlier. After everything I had done for him, he repaid me in the worst possible way. He was constantly butting heads with me, and becoming a real source of negativity and stress. He tried to undermine my authority at every turn, saying one thing to my face, and doing the exact opposite when I wasn’t around. I ended up letting him go, and cut the ties. I was tired of the lies and ego games.

The changes began to roll out in more areas of my life. It was like a spring-cleaning, in terms of getting rid of toxic influences from negative people, ridding myself of my own negative thinking habits, and even changing the kinds of foods I preferred to eat.

The change to a healthy diet, and a healthier lifestyle in general had a huge impact on every part of my life. I believe it’s such a vital part of learning to master yourself that I want to dedicate the next section almost entirely to healthy living. Before I get into it more deeply, I want to share one more episode from my life that occurred around about this time.

It saddens me to think about it, but there are some valuable lessons in it, and it was one of the factors in my life that made me into the kind of person I am today.

My Mother Passes Away

“Suffering becomes beautiful when anyone bears great calamities with cheerfulness, not through insensibility but through greatness of mind.” ~ Aristotle

In June 2004, while I was at racecar school in Carmel, my mother passed away.

The circumstances, and the tragic way that her life came to an end were all very difficult for me to deal with, and the story has some dark, almost macabre elements. I want to share it, even though it's hard to talk about, because it is one of the things that, painful as it was, helped to shape my destiny, and my life's calling.

If you're a very sensitive person, please be warned, some of the following details are a little hard to read and hear about.

The last time I went to see my mother was back in 1999. I still remember how I drove down in my red Lotus Esprit V8 – a dinky little go-cart of a car. I decided to go down and visit, to see how she was doing, even though I didn't really feel welcome there anymore. In fact, I didn't feel safe there at all, with my mom's destructive and chaotic tendencies. She had become so mean-spirited, bitter and hateful. There was still a gun in the house somewhere...

She was living on her own, with only her poodle and her cat for company. A year before she'd kicked my dad out of the house, and my brother had moved out sometime before that. Her mental health had steadily declined over the years, and she was now almost impossible to live with.

We had decided not to commit her to a mental institution, because it didn't seem to do much good, she absolutely hated it, and the state had judged that she was no threat to society. We could no longer use the Baker Act anymore to forcibly commit and treat her due to changes in the law. Three state doctors visited her and said she was definitely crazy and needed treatment, but since she was not suicidal or a danger to anyone else, there was nothing they could do. So she stayed alone in the house. There was no other choice, even though it was not a good thing – there was simply nothing else to be done. She had pushed everyone in the family away, and the state was unwilling to take her in. We decided not to try to forcibly medicate her. The only legal way was to go to the court and get appointed as her legal guardian. My dad sent her money regularly, and as far as we knew she had everything she needed to live comfortably, in her own way, in her very own world.

Visits there were never pleasant, and it was not to be an encouraging or a heart-warming visit this time either. After less than ten minutes she started with her tirades.

“You tell that no good father of yours, if he ever shows his face around here again I'll put a bullet in his brain.” She shouted at me. On and on she went, inventing fantasies and gushing hateful accusations.

“You three men all ganged up against me. You never stood up for me, and had me committed to a mental institution.” She said.

I tried to reach through the fog, and contact some shred of sanity, because I hoped to still reach my mother in there somewhere. I looked at her and said:

“So you don't think there was anything wrong with you? You were completely sane and normal?”

“Absolutely!” She shouted defiantly. “There was nothing wrong with me at all. There was no reason to commit me to an insane asylum.”

I felt that there was just no way to get through to her anymore. But worst of all were her next words to me:

“You two kids are the biggest disappointments of my life! You get out of here! Get out!”

She unceremoniously booted me out of the house, and those were the last words I ever heard from my mother.

“Thanks mom. I really enjoyed the visit. Love you too.” I said, trying to bite back my anger, but feeling a deep sense of despondency and sadness. It was heartbreaking. I never saw her again after that. I always figured I would get a phone call someday, telling me that she’d passed away.

Eventually my mom became a complete recluse, and the whole situation, the way she was living, actually became completely bizarre, even a little macabre. She stopped paying the water bills, so the city shut it off. The family tried to help, but it was little use. At least there was still electricity, and air conditioning, thanks to my Aunt. My mother would go to Costco from time to time and load up on food and basic supplies.

Her sisters went to try to intervene sometime in 2001, but she refused to let them in the house, talking to them only through the mail chute. After she kicked my dad out, the divorce papers had been served, but she just ignored them. Her sisters were trying to help, but my mother eventually opened the door and attacked my aunt Maryanne, jumping on her and beating her, chasing her away too.

My mother was completely obsessive. She’d stopped putting chemicals in the pool, for example, believing that the chemicals were affecting her, psychologically. She insisted that all she had to do was brush it from time to time. Of course the pool became green and stagnant. None of it seemed to register with her anymore.

She had an automatic bread maker, and even when she was still with my dad, she was convinced she could make bread without yeast. Every day she would bake bread, using a different recipe, but never with any yeast, and it never worked. Every day she would throw away the botched bread, and start again from scratch.

The definition of insanity is trying the same thing over and over again believing you will get different results.

She had thrown away most of the photographs and keepsakes from my childhood. Our high school graduation pictures were gone. My Star Wars figurines from the late eighties had still been in the boxes – those were thrown out. All of my dad's pictures from his days in Vietnam, and his wartime medals were all lost. She threw it all away. All the pictures were gone, but she kept the empty frames on the wall.

She'd taken the pictures of my brother and I out of their frames, and replaced them with pictures of strangers, ripped from magazines.

Even while we were still growing up, the one time of the year she loved most of all was Christmas. When we were kids, she spent months picking out gifts for us, and fussing over the details. She put a lot of thought, care and love into it. We later discovered that there were lots of kids toys wrapped up in boxes all over the house, and Christmas decorations everywhere. There were even lights up, as if she had been preparing for a Christmas that would never come, during those last years.

In later years my Aunt showed me letters that my mother had written before my brother was born. There was a kind, gentle, nurturing side to her that I never knew existed. She seemed to have loved being a mother, and she seemed happy. It was like a completely different person. The only person I had known was a cold, emotionless woman, who resorted to the belt.

So there I was five years later in Carmel, California, in my hotel room, after an event, when the phone rang. It was my dad.

“Corey...?”

“Yeah?” I could hear his voice was thick and stuffy, and I could tell he’d been crying. I remember his exact words:

“They found your mother. She’s *deceased*.”

Why would he use that particular word? “Deceased.” He started sobbing, and it was only after he calmed down that he could start telling me what had happened. He’d just gotten off the phone with the Sherriff’s office, and he relayed what they had said.

The mailman had gone to deliver the mail, and opened the mail chute to drop in some letters. He had noticed that the dog was barking, going crazy inside, so he peeped through the opening. He could see that the dog’s hair was all matted, and it looked neglected. He saw that there was a box of dog food from Costco, and the dog had chewed through it to get at the food inside. There was a huge pile of mail on the floor. It looked like the dog had been abandoned, so he decided to inform Animal Control.

When the Animal Control people went over, nobody answered the door, so they called the Sherriff.

The Sherriff’s deputy took the front door off the hinges, and when he walked inside, the smell of death hit him squarely in the face. He looked around the house and found my mother’s body in the room that my brother and I had used. She had been using the bunk bed there, because the waterbed in the master bedroom had sprung a leak some time before.

She had apparently died quite some time ago – based on the dates of the mail on the floor, it looked like about three months.

Her body had completely decomposed, and there was little more than the skeleton left. Apparently the cat had eaten parts of her face, and her hands were gone.

My brother went over there and started cleaning up the place, but couldn't finish the job. He was going to renovate the place to sell it, but he never got that far. As he started going through the place, he discovered more horrible details about the last years of my mother's life. The water had been turned off at the meter, because they thought there was a leak in the system. Water had been running continuously for some reason, so the city had shut it off. Because my mom refused to see anyone, it never got turned on again, even though the bills were paid. For the last period of her life, she lived without running water. We have no idea what she was doing about taking a shower, and even worse, the toilets weren't in use either.

Every time she took a dump she used a paper towel, and folded her turds up, making a perfect little knot. The bathrooms, the tubs, showers and toilets were full of these little packages.

Sometime later I went over to the house with my dad.

The odor is something you can never forget. There were maggot cocoons all over the house. The oils seeping from the corpse had made a stain on the flooring. We had to get a specialist company to come and clean some of the worst of it.

We discovered some of her finger bones, and one of her cervical vertebrae. You always think of bones as being white, but these were still honey-colored. The rest of her remains had already been cremated at that point.

It was a macabre and sad ending to my mother's life.

The only pictures I have of my mother are some photos from Christmas time, which I got from my Aunt, and her driver's license photo. Even in that one you can see the strange look in her eyes, as if

nobody is home. She looks so unhappy, and lost. I found two of my high school yearbooks, and along with the few that I had with me, maybe 20 or 30 photos, that's all that remains. All the rest of those memories are just wiped out.

I know she had at least some love in her life, thinking of how caring she could be, especially when my brother and I were still very young, and thinking of the letters that my aunt showed me.

A friend of mine, upon hearing the story, once said something to me that has stuck with me. Even in her death, my mother managed to provide for her animals. We all have to face the same eventuality one day – the circle of life continues, no matter who you are. At least this way of looking at it offers some sense of meaning.

I've included this part of the story, because I think it's important that everyone thinks about the facts of life, and knowing that you have a limited time here on this planet, we should make the most of every day that we are given.

The experience has motivated me to be more compassionate, and to never miss the opportunity to demonstrate my love for others, either by saying the words, or by doing good things for other people. You never know when it could be your last day on earth – so live the kind of life you feel you were truly meant to live, and don't get caught up in bitterness, resentment and hate.

Even in life's most difficult circumstances, there is always something to learn. With the passing of time, I have come to see that my mother's painful existence, and even her sad end, served a purpose. We can learn from it, and grow. Seen from the perspective of the eternal soul, it was the lesson she had to endure, to go through, and the family had to go through it too.

Lessons from Tragedy

“It is not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live.”

~ Marcus Aurelius

There was a genetic predisposition in my mother’s ancestry that played a part in her illness, as I’ve mentioned before. But there was more at work – factors that contributed to the mental and emotional decay.

Something I learned from Network Chiropractic Care was very interesting to me. If you’ve ever seen somebody with a really flat butt, and their pelvis is tucked inwards – the tailbone is also out of alignment – like a dog with its tail tucked between its legs. This kind of physiology goes along with a certain state of mind – a state of fear, cowardice, violation and self-consciousness.

My mother developed that kind of emotional state throughout her life. She was the middle daughter, and was picked on mercilessly by her two sisters. The abuse was both verbal, and even physical. In high school, her older sister offered to cut her hair, and then deliberately mangled my mother’s hairstyle. Imagine a sensitive high school girl, already dealing with the normal issues of self-consciousness, having to endure that embarrassment.

Add to that the family history I talked about, with her father having this whole other family that nobody knew about, and simply leaving them, and then lying about it for years. All these things must have played on her psyche as she was growing up. The patterns were set early in life, and over the years that actually showed up in her body language – she had the look of a dog with its tail between its legs, and she had that kind of fearful temperament.

She was a state champion swimmer in high school, but afterwards she never exercised at all. Her diet was terrible, for most of her life, and she had a destructive belief system underlying all of it. All of those things contain lessons for us.

As my brother and I got older, we needed her less and less. We were eventually making food for ourselves, and going where we needed to go on our own – her life began to lose purpose. She had no backup – no goals, no ambitions, and no sense of meaning beyond her role as mother. When she lost all that money in the stock market, it was a terrible blow to her self-esteem, and her mental balance.

I could look at it from a sense of self-pity – woe is me, I had such a terrible life, with no love, and no support, and a psychotic, schizophrenic mother. Nobody would blame me for feeling that way – but I don't.

I'm grateful for it, because those experiences drove me to become a seeker of truth. That struggle, and those hardships taught me to endure being uncomfortable. It created a longing in me to solve problems, and overcome challenges. I wanted to go find answers – and that's what I've done.

“Truth lifts the heart, like water refreshes thirst.”

~ Rumi.

I've found meaning in my life by sharing the things I've learned with others, to help them avoid the same negative patterns in life.

These days I get emails – plenty of them each day – from people who are miserable in their lives, and that don't know what their purpose in life is. Some of them are wealthy people – but so unhappy, despite all that wealth. After talking to them, or answering their emails – I'm able to help them. I get them to focus on their outcomes, to think about what's most important. I help people set up a plan of action,

and show them the little things that they can do consistently to change their lives for the better.

Your wounds become your strengths.

Because I was able to overcome those emotional challenges, of feeling unloved, unworthy, and unhappy, as a man, it made me stronger, more confident, and far better at relationships.

When a man doesn't feel like he can get the kind of woman that he wants, and influence her to feel the same – he doesn't feel like a man.

If men can understand women, and how relationships work, it makes them feel worthy, and self-reliant. They can master themselves, and thereby master their relationships too.

With that part of the story out of the way, let's get back to the more positive subject of healthy living.

“My Soul is my guide.”

~ Rumi

Healthy Living

“He that takes medicine and neglects diet, wastes the skill of the physician.”

~ Chinese Proverb

I started talking about the changes I made in my diet during my vacation to Hawaii in 1999, and for me, that was the first step on the journey towards almost permanent good health – and a much better quality of life.

As I’ve continued to investigate and study what experts have to say about healthy diets, healthy living, and the science behind it, I’ve come to refine my own routines and my diet even more. I’ve learned a lot about it, and I’ve settled on foods, supplements and routines that work for me.

Over the years I’ve spent a lot of time learning from the world’s best coaches, experts, doctors, and scientists in my quest to be in the best shape and the best health of my life. I’ve sought out the absolute cutting edge thinking in the health and personal fitness industry. It’s amazing what is really out there.

Just as a *disclaimer*: The following information is what has worked for me, and it’s offered here because I know it has value. Before making any changes to your regular diet, starting an exercise program or medication – always consult your doctor or a licensed physician in your city or country.

For me it always makes sense to look for a doctor who is healthy – who looks healthy, and who believes in living healthy, instead of just prescribing pills. Any doctor that takes a holistic approach, and one

who values the importance of a good diet will be of great benefit to you.

The benefits I've experienced because of the changes in my life aren't always possible to convey in words. Until you have experienced what it feels like, I might as well be describing what a rose looks, smells and feels like to someone who has never even seen a rose. All I can say is that it felt like I got a new lease on life – and I started to really live from that point onwards. People who meet me in person are amazed at how young I look – and I can attribute it to one thing: Eating healthy since the age of 29.

I want to share what I've learned, because I believe it can benefit anyone who wants to master their life.

When your body is healthy, your mental health and emotional balance are easier to maintain. You have more energy to get things done, and you're more creative, and better at solving problems.

Back in 2004 when I was going over the website, discovering all the Tony Robbins material that I never knew existed, I found the course called *Living Health*.

That, together with the *Life Mastery* program, has always been my favorites. They have a relaxed feel to them, compared to some of the others, and they always took place in some great locations, usually on a beach somewhere.

I attended my first one on Vieques beach in Puerto Rico, and when I did, there were a couple of good surprises.

Death Begins in the Colon

For the whole week of the event you go through a detox and a juice-cleanse. You drink a lot of green juices, with lots of wheatgrass and an essential oil mixture created by the nutrition expert Udo Erasmus, called 'Udo's oil.' Eating very little in the way of solid food, for a few days, the idea is to give your entire system a much-needed spring-cleaning.

Just a side-note on the discovery Udo's oil, which I found on their website: In 1980 Udo got pesticide poisoning and became very ill. That event inspired him to study the science of the body, and he spent years looking into health and nutrition, and developed a range of essential oils. His recommendation is to daily take one tablespoon of Udo's Oil for every 50 pounds of body weight.

I discovered some facts about oils as I learned more in the program. The healthier that oils are supposed to be, the more toxic they become to your body when they are fried or cooked.

What I like about Udo's oil is that it's cold-pressed, and not processed in any way. It's made with flax seeds, sesame seeds and sunflower oils.

All of your red blood cells are surrounded by essential fatty acids. Udo's Oil is properly balanced with Omega three, Omega six and Omega nine essential fatty acids in the ratio (2:1:1) that your body needs. If your body is deficient in essential fatty acids, your red blood cells will stick together in clumps. This makes it very difficult for the nutrients and oxygen to reach all of your cells, especially in the smallest capillaries and blood vessels. I have seen this in Dark Field Microscopy of live living blood analysis in person.

When I started taking it, I noticed that my skin became softer and healthier. Sometimes I eat nuts only instead of taking the oil, but

most of the time it's a regular supplement in my diet, in addition to the nuts I eat every day.

You can find it on Amazon, listed as “Flora Udo's Choice Oil, 3-6-9 Blend,” or look for the link on my website in the article:

Rediscovered: The Fountain Of Youth

When it comes to your body's sewer system – your colon, and your lymphatic system – some people are a little squeamish to talk about it, or think about it, but it's such an important aspect of health that I want to devote a few paragraphs to it at least.

During those four or five days of the Tony Robbins life mastery event, we were encouraged to do two or three colonics – or as it is sometimes called, colon hydrotherapy.

There are several types of colonics, but the best are the ‘Libbe bed’ and the ‘Angel of Water.’ In the State of Florida you need a certificate, or a license to help people with colonics, but it might be different in your part of the world – so it's good to check.

Colon hydrotherapy is amazing. Edgar Cayce, America's famous “sleeping prophet” who I've spoken about before, was also a firm believer in the method. He referred to it as taking an ‘internal bath.’ He would often say that health begins in the colon, and because it can become such a problem, he would also say that ‘death begins in the colon.’ It's a part of healthy living that many people overlook.

"And keeping the colon clean is that which is necessary for every well-balanced body; hence should be a part of the experience for each entity."

~ (Edgar Cayce reading 1703-2)

You can be eating the healthiest and most nutrient dense foods on the planet, but if your internal sewer system is backed up, it will eventually kill you.

Cayce recommended an ‘internal bath’ every six months for everyone, and said that human beings would be much better off following this advice.

The large intestine is about 5 feet (1.5m) long, and the small intestine is about 20 feet long, (6m). It’s your body’s sewer system. They are lined by tiny villi and microvilli. These are tiny, finger-like projections that extend into intestines and increase the internal surface area of the intestinal walls, making available a greater surface area for absorption. When it gets clogged up, you don’t get as much nutrition from your food, no matter how good your diet is.

The typical diet of people worldwide is abundant in protein, carbs, sugars and very little green vegetables.

When we eat any acid forming, cooked or processed foods, our body surrounds this food with mucus to absorb and neutralize the acids/toxins/pesticides/etc. in the food. Over time this mucus sticks to the walls of the small intestine and colon, coating the villi.

Over the years of this highly toxic onslaught of poor dietary choices, the small intestine becomes less and less able to absorb the nutrients from the food we eat, because the walls of the small intestine has become caked up with hardened mucus and partially digested food. The colon also backs up as well with the same stuff. The small intestine can’t absorb the nutrients the body needs.

The colon becomes clogged with the same mucus and trapped feces, and it continues to rot and ferment in your body. Micro-organisms that live in this gooey, toxic lining, burrow through the walls of your colon and small intestine. You literally get feces and toxic bacteria leaking into your bloodstream. Your body must expend precious immune system resources just keeping all this bacteria at bay. You become susceptible to every common cold as your waste disposal system is overloaded.

When the colon becomes backed up, it prevents your body's lymphatic system from properly draining into your colon. Unlike your body's blood system, which has a heart to pump your body's blood supply, your lymphatic system has no internal pump to move toxins and wastes that your body's cells release. The lymphatic fluid that surrounds all your body's cells drains to the lymph nodes and then the colon. Since the lymphatic system has no pump it must rely on the expansion and contraction of your body's muscles and tissues to move and pump the fluid throughout your body. When the colon is clogged up, the excess toxic waste of the lymphatic system builds up in your body's lymph nodes. Eventually the cells of the lymph nodes mutate into cancer cells trying to stay alive in the acid environment. Traditional medicine cuts out or irradiates these cancerous cells (Hodgkin's disease).

Probably very few people will change their diet after learning about this, but I can't stress enough just what a difference it makes. In the end it's up to you. It's a question of desire, self-motivation and self-love. Most people would dismiss it as "too hard", "I'd rather take a pill", "if it shortens my life so what, I'd rather eat whatever I want." If you are one of those people who have high standards for yourself like I do, then here is what I do:

I take two colon-cleansing supplements. The first one is Psyllium Husk Powder. On my website there is a link to a 12 ounce product that's made by Yerba Prima – or you can find it on Amazon.

The other one is Bentonite Clay. There's a link to a product by Redmond, in a 10-ounce jar, that's also available there.

Here's how you do it:

I use a 16-ounce bottle with a top to shake and mix the powder with 8-10 ounces of distilled or reverse osmosis water.

- Put two teaspoons of psyllium husk powder in first after the water.

- Then two teaspoons of bentonite clay.
- Put the top on and shake vigorously for 15-20 seconds.
- Then chug the mix down.

It tastes bland, but I don't mind it. For whiners that whine about not liking the taste, then add some organic apple juice to the mix to sweeten it. The reason you want to quickly drink the whole mix down is it gets thicker and thicker the longer it sits as the clay/husk powder absorbs the water.

I take these at least an hour before and 2 hours after any meal. Usually first thing in the morning, after meals or right before bed.

When I was cleansing for the first time ever, I did this 3-4 times a day for a month because I was still eating regular meals and most of the mixture will stick to the solid food and take longer to clean out your sewer system, and experimenting. I do an annual cleanse using this mixture for about 5-7 days.

This mixture sticks to the mucus and impacted feces and partially digested food, when it enters the small intestine and colon. As your small intestine, and later your colon, move to push things along, the mixture sticks to and pulls the mucus and waste along with it during the natural movements of your intestines and colon. Food normally just slides by this mucus and waste. But the bentonite clay and psyllium husk powder mixture binds it up along with billions of bacteria to move them out of the body.

This exposes the walls of your small intestine to your food so it can absorb the nutrients it needs. It also cleans out the colon and removes the impacted feces. Now your lymphatic system can drain properly. That is why exercise is essential to the proper functioning of your body.

After a colonic, when you dump all that waste out of your colon, it smells totally wretched when it comes out of your body. It can feel like you're pooping out a rope. It's not a pretty sight, but it's quite

sobering thinking about how you've been carrying all those toxins around inside your body for all this time. You literally lose 5 to 10 pounds when you do it.

With a properly set up colonic treatment center, the whole thing can be very hygienic, and quite relaxing. You get to lie there and relax, while nice music plays in the background.

The Libbe bed and the Angel of Water colonics work when you lie on your back, and purified and filtered water comes down a tube into your colon. The water flows in, and when you feel you're full, you let go of all the pressure. After a while the stuff coming out is basically just water, and you're good to go.

Afterwards you feel amazing. Your face is flushed, your eyes will be bright, and you feel full of energy – clean from the inside out.

There is another, older system, called the 'closed system' – but I don't recommend it because it's uncomfortable and harder to relax. You end up feeling like you need to poop for half an hour because the tube in your butt is about an inch in diameter vs. the small pen size of the Libbe and Angel of Water systems water injection tube.

Instead of the release when you want to like the other two systems, this one drains out slowly and requires the colon hydro therapist to be with you to change the valves from pumping water in, to letting the waste flow out. You can't push out the waste like the bed type systems because it will shoot the tube out of your butt and get everywhere. With the Libbe and Angel of Water systems, the hydro therapist only checks on you every 5-10 minutes so you can go "cruising" in private.

I don't eat perfectly every single time – sometimes I overindulge in rich foods and drinking, and sometimes I spoil myself. When I'm traveling, it's not always possible to stick to my regular diet either. I make a routine of cleansing my system about twice a year, and that helps to get rid of all those built up toxins.

Remember, along with all the nasty things that come out, you're also going to lose some of your healthy bacteria – so it's important to replace that.

What you need to put back are some healthy probiotics. There's one organic product that I use from Garden of Life, which you can get at Whole Foods in the US. It contains 34 different strains of probiotics that helps to repopulate your system with what it needs to maintain balance.

If it happens that your stool gets too soft, like you can't pinch a clean loaf off when you go to the toilet, probiotics can help with the problem. Probiotics makes your turds firm and easy to pass with only one wipe needed. There's nothing like a nice clean pinch after making a dent in the porcelain.

The Fountain of Youth, and Alkaline Foods

“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”

~ Hippocrates

In the *Living Health* course there was also an interview with Dr. Robert O. Young, who was, at the time, known as a talented naturopathic practitioner. He made the news just recently during a controversial legal trial, which I will discuss later in this chapter, but despite the controversy, his views on healthy living deserve our attention.

What I learned from going through the material in Tony Robbins’ course, and later, from reading plenty of books on the subject, made a lot of sense to me, and I’ve followed much of Dr. Young’s advice. I highly recommend reading two of his books:

“The pH Miracle: Balance Your Diet, Reclaim Your Health,” and

“Sick and Tired? Reclaim Your Inner Terrain,” which is co-authored by his wife, Shelley Redford Young.

You’ll find the book links on my website

UnderstandingRelationships.com by clicking the products tab and then the Amazon products listings, or you can just look for them on Amazon. If you’re serious about making changes to your way of thinking about food, and your way of life, there’s a ton of great information in those books.

Dr. Young was always a bit of a lab geek, and you could usually find him with his eyes glued to his microscope. Years ago he and his wife started an in-depth study of different kinds of healthy eating, while they lived in California. They experimented with vegan diets, and different kinds of foods, and Dr. Young would analyze their blood

samples after meals. He would draw blood samples at certain time intervals, and examine them closely to find out what effect the food was having on their bodies. He used a process called ‘dark field microscopy.’

This is a type of light microscopy which produces brightly illuminated objects on a dark background. A drop of blood is sandwiched between two glass plates, and put under the microscope. It allows you to see your living red and white blood cells, and shows up cholesterol, yeast, and candida – basically everything that’s going on in your blood. Your tiny blood cells, and everything else that’s in your bloodstream shows up, floating around in the fluid. It’s quite a sobering insight into your true state of health.

Cholesterol looks like broken glass in the bloodstream. Healthy cells are perfectly shaped, nice and round, and never clumped together. They’re surrounded by essential fatty acids, including Omega 3, 6 and 9. (Udo’s oil supplements these in the perfect 2:1:1 ratio).

I would encourage anyone who is able to find a licensed pathologist that is able to do a live blood analysis, and take a look at what’s going on in your blood stream.

When viewing your blood under a microscope, you can actually see when there is a “logjam” of red blood cells. I don’t care how healthy you think you are, looking at your living blood can change your opinion. Many athletes and fitness fanatics are very fit, but can still be extremely unhealthy. You sometimes hear about incredibly fit and amazing looking athletes dropping dead of heart attacks at a young age.

When you use dried blood samples instead of “live” blood, you get different insights. Traces of health problems from years ago show up. When they examined my blood in 2004, they could tell me that it looked like I had suffered from digestive problems about six years earlier.

That was before I made the trip to Hawaii, when I was still suffering from lots of health and digestive problems. After that I changed my diet, and by the time I got to *Life Mastery*, my live blood analysis was perfect. There was no yeast, no candida, and my red blood cells were in great condition. Other people who attended the same course with me also had their blood examined, and it was shocking to see the unhealthy blood samples – especially from those people who tended to be overweight.

If you're able to get your blood analyzed by a pathologist, you might be surprised at what you find. It's a great way to check the internal status of your body. As I said, it can be sobering.

The most important thing that Dr. Young confirmed, is that there is an important link between the health of our bodies and the acid / alkaline balance of the foods we consume.

In order to have optimum health, free from common illnesses and other disease, the body needs to be in an alkaline state.

What is an alkaline state? It's where 80% of the foods you eat leave an alkaline ash in your body when they are metabolized. The acid forming foods must comprise no more than 20% of your diet.

What's really shocking is that 95% of the typical American diet consists almost entirely of acid forming foods. In other words, the food leaves an acid ash, which must be buffered with 80 parts of alkalinity to every 20 parts acid.

“Acidosis and Toxicosis are the primary causes of all disease. Rid the body of these poisons and correct the habits of living, and good health will be regained and maintained.”

~ P.L. Clark, BS, MD, Ph.Sa

These are some common alkaline forming foods:

- Almonds,
- all dark green leafy vegetables,
- green beans,
- broccoli,
- cabbage,
- collard greens,
- kale, parsley,
- celery,
- cucumbers,
- green peppers,
- Wheat grass, etc.

Here are some typical acid forming foods:

- All meats such as fish, pork, red meat, chicken, turkey,
- hamburgers,
- breads,
- sugar, candy,
- most grains,
- potatoes,
- dairy,
- soft drinks,
- alcohol,
- chocolate,
- most nuts,
- Fruit juices which are highly concentrated sugar, etc.
- Basically all proteins, carbohydrates and especially sugar and refined sugar or high fructose corn syrup.

What's ironic is that sugar, which almost everybody loves, also becomes one of the most toxic and acid forming foods when it is metabolized by your body. Most people's regular intake of food is very acidic in nature. Common sense tells you that your body is going to suffer because of it.

It's not that you should never eat acid-forming foods, but it is absolutely essential to ensure that when you eat these foods they only take up 20% of the space on your plate. The other 80% should be comprised of green alkaline producing foods in order to neutralize the acid, thereby maintaining the optimal alkaline balance, and the health of your body and its systems.

It's interesting that Edgar Cayce, the so-called "sleeping prophet" who was so successful in healing people also recommended an alkaline diet, as far back as the 1930's. When doing readings on people, he sometimes advised eating specific things, to help cure their particular health problems. For most of the people he helped, and for just about everyone in general, he recommended leafy greens, and cutting out processed foods and red meat to a large extent. His dietary advice complements the advice from Dr. Young.

Your body always tries to maintain homeostasis – a good, natural, healthy balance. It makes sense to feed it a balanced diet, with everything it needs to function at its optimum levels. It takes 80 parts alkaline food to neutralize 20 parts acidic food – so that's what you should be eating. Common sense tells us that it's much better to eat an alkaline diet that makes it easy for your body to maintain its optimum alkaline state vs. eating an acidic diet that is similar to burning the candle at both ends and which literally burns you and your body out, thereby causing a premature death and a short life-expectancy.

Heart disease and heart attacks are caused by an unbalanced diet very high in acid forming foods. When your diet is very acidic, your body produces excess cholesterol and this lines the arteries and blood vessels. During normal times when we eat according to what's in season, typically during the winter we would eat grains and anything that can be stored during the cold winter months when it's too cold to grow anything. During the summer months we would tend to eat

more green vegetables when they are available. Our bodies would return to normal (during the summer) because of the pH buffers in the greens make it easy to rid the body of plaque buildup and toxins stored in the fat tissues. The cholesterol, which had built up in our blood vessels during the winter months, would dissolve and you would poop/pee/sweat it out. However, since most people's diet consists of 95% acid forming foods, the cholesterol will continue to form plaque that eventually clogs the arteries and blood vessels. That causes strokes, heart attacks and death.

When people get colds, the flu and other illnesses that cause us to have a runny nose, vomit, cold sweats, diarrhea, or produce mucus, it is the body's way of binding up toxins and acids to get them out of the body and away from your vital organs. These illnesses are simply the body's way of trying to re-balance itself and return to an optimal alkaline state.

What causes people to get fat? Your body's cells need three things to thrive and survive:

- 1) oxygen,
- 2) the proper nutrients and
- 3) The ability to eliminate waste.

If any one of the three is lacking, your cells will mutate (into cancer cells, for example) in order to try to adapt and stay alive in the overly acidic environment. Normally when your body returns to an alkaline state, the mutated cells will devolve back into healthy red blood cells. This process is called pleomorphism. When your body does not have the energy or nutrients it needs to neutralize the acid, it cannot safely move these toxins and acids out of the body. So its only choice is to park them away from the vital organs until (hopefully) your body gets what it needs so it can safely eliminate them. Your body uses fat to bind up toxins and acid. As the body begins to age, the calcium in

your bones and teeth start to leech out because of this constant imbalance, and it's no wonder that humans have such a short lifespan compared to some of the animals in nature.

I recently read about the Greenland shark that can live more than 400 years – and only reaches sexual maturity after 150 years. There are whales that live over 250 years. The Galapagos turtles live to be 150-200 years old. There are animals in nature that live for literally hundreds of years, yet a lot of humans drop dead after only 50 or 60 years from cancer and heart disease.

The longest living animals tend to move very slowly, no hurry and no rush.

You seldom find the kind of health problems that humans suffer from in nature. If you find cancer in fish, it's usually because they've been swimming around in polluted water.

It's an analogy that Dr. Young uses to describe what having an unhealthy bloodstream means to your body. Think of your blood as a fish bowl, or the water in an aquarium. If the water gets dirty and cloudy, the fish will get sick and die – unless you change the water.

It's the same with your bloodstream – it needs to be clean and pure if you want to have a healthy body.

For me this knowledge was a complete paradigm shift. When I came across Dr. Young's books and explanations, I realized how my diet was ruining my life. Before I understood all of this, I had a really terrible diet. I basically ate whatever I wanted and whenever I wanted.

I was constantly getting colds, suffering from the flu, and struggling with skin conditions and hay fever. My eyes would get puffy, red and

watery, and my nose would run constantly. At least once or twice a year I would get the flu – the kind that takes two or three weeks to go away, and where you get that nasty green mucus, and it feels like trying to blow rubber bands out of your nose. I had blocked up nostrils for most of my life, up until the age of 32. I was only able to breathe through one nostril unless I used nasal spray. When you use that for a couple of days your nose starts to burn, becomes dry, and might even start bleeding. It was a miserable existence.

When I was a kid I used to suffer from terrible skin problems. In sixth grade I was eating a lot of candy and junk. My body was constantly trying to get rid of all those toxins, and when going to the toilet, or flushing the bad stuff out through colds and flu wasn't enough, my body had to find other ways. The skin is your biggest organ, and a lot of waste gets excreted through it. For me, the result of eating so much junk was constant skin problems. The rashes on my legs got really bad, and I was scratching all the time. I had festering sores that would last for a year or two, without going away. The sores would make my pants stick to my skin, and every time I got up from my desk it would rip the scabs off. By the time I got home, it was a sticky, pussy mess. My mom would say: "Just put some calamine lotion on it."

I struggled with it for years. When I got to high school I developed sores on my right foot and ankle, the size of a silver dollar, which stayed for a really long time, and I still have the scars today.

I always used to get sick around Christmas time. It makes sense, when you think about it – it's generally colder around that time of year, at least in the Northern Hemisphere. It's also a time when you're eating and drinking too much. The diet is mostly acidic, and whatever greens were available, were usually cooked. Christmas for us was always about eating a lot of turkey, stuffing, and cranberry sauce, lots of cake, candy and junk. The family would come over –

and that was always a stressful thing – and of course, I would get sick every year.

Back in 1999, before I went to Hawaii, I had these golf ball sized swellings under my armpits that were always sore. I didn't know what it was at the time, but it was my lymphatic system that was all clogged up. The lymph nodes under the armpits were swollen as a result. The entire system was backed up, because my colon was backed up. Two or three weeks after changing my diet, it went away completely.

When I started juicing vegetables, eating more salads, and making sure that 80% of my diet was things like collard greens, or kale, spinach, green pepper, cucumber – basically much more green stuff, my health started to improve tremendously. A rule of thumb is that the greener the vegetable, the higher the amount of alkalinity.

In 1999 I started changing my eating habits completely, and I've kept refining it over the years. Instead of buying giant bags of M&M's, peanut butter cups, ice-cream, and always having junk food in my fridge, I chose healthier alternatives.

At 34 I got to experience the relief of being able to breathe properly, effortlessly, for the first time in my life. I no longer suffered from any of those health problems that I had as a child, my skin cleared up, my digestion improved, my weight came down, I looked better, and I felt a lot better. If I need energy, I drink some green juice, and minutes later I feel amazing – full of energy, and free from health issues.

It's common sense to make it easy on your body. It makes sense to give your body what it needs. If you're going to eat fried foods, red meat, pork, and things of that nature, make sure it's not more than 20% of what you eat.

There's no doubt that Dr. Young deserves credit for his work in healthcare, and confirming the health benefits of an alkaline diet. His work has subsequently become more accepted by mainstream medicine, and millions of people are benefiting from this knowledge, and leading healthier lives because of it.

There are always two sides to every story, though, and Dr. Young has made his fair share of mistakes.

My stepmother actually knew him back in the 1970's, and in her opinion – besides being gifted, he was also an arrogant man. Throughout his career Dr. Young had to fight against the current of mainstream medical opinion, and the opinions of qualified medical practitioners. Since he was never qualified as a medical doctor, his peers tended to look down on him. Dr. Young basically had a hard-on for the medical industry, and they in turn started labeling him as a “quack,” and tried to discredit his research.

The old saying always holds true: Pride cometh before the fall, and Young eventually ran into legal troubles. He was treating terminally ill patients at his estate, and when some of the patients failed to be cured, he came under investigation.

The San Diego Union Tribune reported in April 2017: *“In a trial that stretched from November 2015 to February 2016, a North County jury convicted Young on two counts of practicing medicine without a license, and acquitted him of a third. The jury deadlocked on the six remaining counts.”*

Besides being sentenced to jail time, prosecutor Darvas insisted on another condition of his plea: Young had to make a public admission declaring that he is not microbiologist, hematologist, medical or naturopathic doctor or trained scientist. He gave those admissions when he entered his guilty plea.

Another article mentions a document – a complaint, in which prosecutors say he charged four terminally ill patients at least \$50,000 each for treatment. One paid more than \$120,000 for treatment. Families of the patients that were terminally ill were accusing him of malpractice after he failed to cure them.

The San Diego Union Tribune explained further that *“He was ordered to wear an ankle bracelet and stay on house arrest at his Valley Center estate, dubbed Rancho Del Sol — a place one BBC report referred to as “a millionaire’s paradise, funded by alkaline eating.”*

The trial was a controversial one, and opinions were divided. Young denied ever telling people that he was a licensed doctor, and said that their decisions to go to his 46-acre ranch, called Rancho del Sol, for terminal care, were the choice of the patients.

Common sense would make you think that a professional like Dr. Young would have taken the proper steps to avoid all of this. By following prescribed protocols, putting a team together consisting of accredited medical doctors, and working with the medical establishment, he might have created a much happier destiny for himself. Perhaps there is a lesson for us in his story about hubris – about being too zealous, over-confident, or arrogant.

Even so, he has helped a lot of people live healthier lives, and even helped cure patients who were otherwise untreatable. Of course, not every case had such a happy ending.

The retrial on the six remaining deadlocked counts took place just recently, in June 2017.

Superior Court Judge Richard Whitney, who oversaw Young’s case, said that while there was some benefit to Young’s work, the author —

who has no post-high school degrees from accredited institutions — had oversimplified the “extremely complex fields” of microbiology and hematology.”

(Figueroa, 2017)

The 65-year-old Young didn’t speak during the hearing, and he was finally sentenced to a further five months in prison.

That doesn’t mean that we should toss out his advice about diet, though, or that the verdict should cloud our judgment on the issue.

“Several of Young’s supporters, including former patients, attended the hearing. Afterward, they defended him and his work, and said he had been unfairly characterized in court. Supporter Brian Claypool said Young’s treatments helped one of his family members, and called the court case “a big injustice.”

“They ignored all the good he has done, all the people he has helped,” Claypool said.

(Figueroa, 2017)

Dr. Young may have landed himself in a world of trouble, perhaps by making some bad choices, for whatever reasons he had, but it doesn’t detract from the work that he did. The fact remains, after the research he conducted, mostly on himself and his wife, he discovered some important things about the kinds of foods we eat, and his findings have been verified by others.

These days a number of medical doctors have taken Young’s work even further, and confirmed his views about the benefits of alkaline diets. One example is one of the world’s pre-eminent experts in heart surgery, Dr. Steven Gundry. I came across his books through Tony Robbins too, and I can recommend these two:

“The Plant Paradox - The Hidden Dangers in “Healthy” Foods that Cause Disease and Weight Gain”

“Dr. Gundry’s Diet Evolution - Turn off the genes that are killing you and your waistline”

Dr. Gundry has helped people on the verge of dying, people who have had multiple bypasses, people who were told their conditions were “inoperable” or that they were “hopeless cases.”

Through changing their diet, and exercise regimes, he was able to add years to their lives. There are people who were overweight, people who couldn’t move around or get out of bed, and even athletes whose arteries were so clogged with cholesterol and plaque – and he helped them to make life transformations by changing their diet, and the proper exercise routines.

“The doctor of the future will give no medicine but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet and in the cause and prevention of disease.” ~ Thomas Edison

There is also a lot of misinformation about alkaline diets – now that everyone has jumped on the bandwagon, you will find some sources of information that actually list acid-forming foods as alkaline. It’s important to do your homework thoroughly before adopting any kind of diet – and of course, get the opinion of a qualified medical doctor.

One of the best NFL players of all time, Tom Brady, and his wife, Gisele Bundchen, follow the same kind of diet. Their personal chef was interviewed by Allen Campbell, and when asked what the super-couple prefer to eat, he replied:

"So 80 percent of what they eat is vegetables. [I buy] the freshest vegetables. If it's not organic, I don't use it. And whole grains: brown rice, quinoa, millet, beans. The other 20 percent is lean meats: grass-

fed organic steak, duck every now and then, and chicken. As for fish, I mostly cook wild salmon."

Sound familiar? It's exactly the same ratio of alkaline to acid-forming foods we've mentioned. This kind of diet has gone mainstream, and many people are living more productive, easier lives, and finding that they don't get sick all the time anymore.

I strongly recommend that you educate yourself on the subject, either with the books I've mentioned here, or those that your doctor recommends. If you would like to read the articles I've written over the years, you will find them online by Googling the following terms:

- "Rediscovered: The Fountain Of Youth By Coach Corey Wayne"
- "Death Begins In The Colon By Coach Corey Wayne"

There are some great videos and links to tons of further information on my articles. There is also a video which I made a couple of years ago that explains how to make Corey's Green Juice – but here's the description, for those that prefer to read:

Corey's Green Juice

First – you'll need a good juicer. There are lots of different kinds on the market. One that I've enjoyed using quite often is called 'Green Power.' Most of the good ones are made from stainless steel, so they are real easy to clean. They also have a hand-crank model, which is great for the wheatgrass.

These days I have two different types of juicers. When I first started juicing, I bought the Green Star twin gear juicer which cost about \$550. The one I use now is the Mack daddy of all juicers. It's a 100% stainless steel twin gear juicer called the Super Angel Juicer and has a cost of about \$2000. The gears are bigger and sharper, on this model, so the green stuff self-feeds better. When the pulp comes out it is completely dry, unlike with some of the cheaper models. Some people process the wet pulp again to squeeze the last of the juice out.

I drink two to four, 24 ounce glasses of juice consisting of a mixture of 50% pure green vegetable juice, and 50% water per day. I like the big plastic 24 ounce tumbler glasses. If you are traveling, Dr. Young also has a powered greens supplement you can take with you called "Doc Broc's Power Plants."

This recipe I am about to give you will make two portions of 1 gallon each time you make pure green vegetable juice. This will last 3 to 4 days for two people, depending on how much you both drink.

I use empty 1-gallon BPA-free plastic jugs for bottled water to store my vegetable juice in the refrigerator. I also reuse BPA free gallon jugs that I sterilize with acid water from the water ionizer after each juice portion is gone. Acid water is great for cleaning. The alkaline water setting on an ionizer will help keep your PH balanced and your body properly hydrated. I have my refrigerator set on 38° to 41° Fahrenheit. This keeps the juice at its absolute coldest temperature and away from the air so its enzymes and nutrients can be preserved

as long as possible. Here are the ingredients I buy at Whole Foods that will make 2 portions of 1 gallon each:

- (6-8) large bundles of organic celery (3-4 per each gallon)
- (6) organic large sized Fuji apples (3 per each gallon portion to sweeten the mixture)
- (2) bundles of Lacinato Kale (1 bundle per each gallon)
- (2) bundles of parsley (1 bundle per each gallon)
- (2) bundles of collard greens that has 6-8 large leaves (1 bundle per each gallon)
- (4) 8 ounce bags of precut wheatgrass (2 bags per each gallon)

What's really interesting is that Lacinato Kale has several times more calcium in its juice than milk (kale unlike milk has no lactose or sugar) or any other vegetable. Wheatgrass has over 92 of the known elements, some just in trace amounts. Wheatgrass is the most nutrient dense food on the planet. It is also a complete protein and is very high in vitamin C. What's also interesting is that the blood of plants, chlorophyll is only different from the hemoglobin in your blood by one aspect. Hemoglobin has a central atom of iron. Chlorophyll has a central atom of magnesium.

Another thing that is important to understand about vegetables is that when you cook them and the temperature goes above 118°, it starts to destroy the enzymes and nutrients. What I found when I started eating this way was that it got to be a real pain in the ass to eat salads and other raw vegetables all the time. Juicing green vegetables is a godsend! It's easy. It's convenient, and I usually drink my vegetable juice with my meals.

As far as maximizing the nutritional benefit of juicing, and in a perfect world, you would pick your vegetables right from the fields and juice the ingredients drinking the mixture immediately upon

completion of the juicing process. When vegetables are juiced, and the cell membranes are ruptured, it speeds up the breakdown of the enzymes and nutrients. However, by keeping it refrigerated in the temperature range I mentioned above you slow down the decomposition process.

It's a trade-off between convenience and freshness. It's a pain in the ass juicing every day.

This is the best alternative I have found to juicing and cleaning up the juicer every time you use it. It takes about 45 minutes from start to finish to make a gallon of juice and then to clean everything up afterwards with the Super Angel, and about an hour for the Green Star Juicer.

I like making juice every 3-4 days. For several years I made juice several times a day until I started making it in gallons. I know this is not what Dr. Young recommends, but I haven't noticed much difference other than a little bit of a difference in taste when drinking freshly juiced vegetables versus day-old vegetable juice. It makes my skin softer, I only need 5 to 6 hours of sleep every night at a minimum, and I don't get the colds or common illnesses that everybody else suffers from any more.

A good juicer can make it easy to add lots of green nutrients to your diet, without the hassle of preparing tasty meals.

Just adding green juice to your diet is an absolute revelation. I've also added to that the Udo's oil, and another supplement, pHour Salts I learned about from Dr. Young. Just try juicing for 30 days. You can FEEL the difference. When I get dry or red eyes, I drink a green juice and it clears it up within 30 minutes.

Corey's Green Alkaline Smoothie

I want to share the recipe for my famous Green Alkaline Smoothie here, and if you would like to watch the video on my website, where I show you exactly how it's done, just Google this subheading, and you should find it there.

I show the most efficient way possible to blend all ingredients together and the order in which I do it. I also discuss the difference just one smoothie per day can make in your skin, vitality, health and overall sense of well-being. This recipe makes four days' worth of smoothies.

The Ingredients are as follows:

- 2 Heaping Tablespoons of Ground Cinnamon
- 2 Heaping Tablespoons of Vanilla Extract
- 1 Fuji Apple
- 1 Head of Broccoli
- 5 Medjool Dates, (remove pits!)
- 1 Green Pepper
- 1 Cucumber
- 6 Large Stalks of Celery
- 12 Ounces of Alkaline Water
- 12-15 Cherry Tomatoes
- 6-10 Strawberries
- 2 Five-ounce Tubs of Spinach

I suggest using a Vitamix 5200 Blender, along with Essentia 9.5 pH Drinking Water, and then using Stretch Tite Plastic Food Wrap to

keep it fresh, and Kizmos or Monster Straw Smoothie Straws to drink it with.

How to Make the World's Best Salad

If you're trying to detox your body, lose weight, and become healthier, this salad is just the ticket. It contains the perfect mix of nutrients to support healthy growth and maintenance.

I created a YouTube video, where I show you exactly how to make the salad. If you Google the subheading (How To Make The World's Best Salad) you will find it on YouTube, or on my site.

You should look at food as the building blocks of a healthy, vibrant and energetic body. Your cells need good healthy food to build healthy cells, remove toxins and waste, and to stay alive, vibrant and functioning at peak levels. Weak, damaged and unhealthy cells impair the functioning of your human organism.

70-80% (alkaline forming ingredients) of a salad plate should be taken up with green vegetables. 20-30% (acid forming ingredients) of the plate should be taken up by fish, turkey or chicken; and raw pecans, almonds, walnuts, brazil nuts, hazel nuts, macadamia nuts, hemp seed, apples, croutons, strawberries, raspberries, raisins, etc. Salad dressings should be used sparingly.

The secret of a great salad is lots of variety of textures, ingredients and tastes. First I lay out two plates, and start with lining them both with organic spinach.

The ingredients I use are as follows:

- Two plates of organic spinach
- One Cucumber
- One organic Avocado
- One organic green pepper

- 2-3 stalks of celery
- One organic Fuji apple
- 6 sliced strawberries
- A pound of Turkey, with no antibiotics,
- Raw walnuts
- Raw pecan nuts
- Organic raisins
- Organic almonds,
- A poppy seed salad dressing,
- Texas toast croutons

pHour Salts

I sometimes take 1 scoop of Dr. Young's "pHour Salts" dissolved in a 8 oz glass of water 1-3 times a day depending on how much I have been polluting my body with too much living the good life. I take it two hours after a meal. It's a great supplement to help make it easy for your body to keep your pH at the right level so your body stays in an optimum alkaline state during the day, especially when you are traveling. The food and fluids that you ingest either make it easy or make it hard for your body to maintain its natural alkaline state.

pHour Salts is a combination of four powerful salts (sodium bicarbonate, magnesium chloride, potassium bicarbonate, and calcium chloride) that help maintain the alkaline balance in your body. These salts are naturally occurring in all fluids of the body.

You can easily find it online - phmlife.com sells Dr. Young's supplements.

There are cheaper alternatives of baking soda available at stores and pharmacies. Arm & Hammer Multi-Brand - Baking Soda costs only a few dollars, as opposed to the more expensive kinds.

Baking soda actually has a number of health benefits, including helping for indigestion, treating insect bites, controlling odors, and it's also good for your teeth and mouth.

When you are worried, stressed or have very negative thoughts, this causes your body to create acid. Your negative thoughts will poison your body literally! I strive to eat healthy 80% of the time, and 20% of the time I will eat junk or have a few drinks. Interestingly, and not by coincidence... it's also the same ratio of what it takes for 80 parts alkalinity to neutralize 20 parts of acid.

When you do overindulge in drinking – you can help prevent a terrible hangover by drinking plenty of water between drinks. Most

of the symptoms of a hangover are caused by dehydration, and from upsetting the pH balance in your body.

When I decide to indulge in a drink or two, every once in a while, I make sure to give my body what it needs to cope. For every two drinks I consume, I drink one 8-12 ounce glass of water. That really helps take care of the dehydration. When I get home I'll suck down some of my green juice, and take the pHour Salts – which takes care of the pH balance. When I wake up the next day, I seldom have a hangover.

I often take a glass of the salts after a meal, especially when I'm traveling.

When you're not at home, it can be challenging to stick to your healthy way of eating, so the supplements can tide you over until you're back home. There's one supplement you can usually get from Whole Foods or Amazon, called Emergen-C. It's 1000 mg of vitamin C and comes in little convenient packets.

When your body is full of toxins, it will naturally try to restore the balance. You might get a runny nose, diarrhea, you might vomit, or feel really ill. It's your body's emergency release system. It will try to dump out the toxins as quickly as possible, because there's just too much to deal with.

When you know that the problem is just that you've been eating the wrong kinds of foods, or drinking too much, you can do something about it to help your body get its balance back. I've experimented with this diet and way of eating over the last 15 years, and perfected my methods. I can tell when my body needs some help to balance the pH, or when it needs to take an internal bath. When I'm too acidic, my nasal passages start to close up, and my nose starts to run.

I've developed a morning ritual, and this way it's a habit – something I do consistently. I start off with a glass of Corey's Green Juice and a separate glass using Garden of Life raw organic protein, (I like the

chocolate flavor). It contains 22g protein in each serving, and it is dissolved in water. I mix in some of the pH salts, dissolved in a 10 ounce glass of water. It's kind of clumpy, to start off with, so I use a spoon. Afterwards I can just suck down the last bit of it after letting it sit for 10-15 minutes while I drink the green juice to completely dissolve the powder since it tends to stick together and clump up when you first mix it with water.

After that, regular as clockwork, I'm ready to drop a morning deuce and make a nice dent in the porcelain. After a shower, I'm ready to start the day.

Ionized Water

This is another regular feature in my life. When I found out about many of the health benefits, I bought a water Ionizer from Chanson Water. They're a little expensive, but the health benefits really make it worth the money.

My dad got one, and I noticed back then already that my skin became softer. It makes you feel brighter and sharper – and it helps with the alkaline pH balance in your body. When you are dehydrated, your fingers and the palms of your hands get wrinkly. Within a half hour of drinking ionized water, your hands and fingers are plump and moist again.

Ionized alkaline water is smoother and lighter than regular water. It's almost as if the water is 'wetter.' This is because of the micro-clustered structure of ionized water, which allows you to drink your daily limit without feeling bloated or waterlogged. Water Ionizers produce water that has five to six molecules per cluster, which is smaller than regular water molecule clusters of about 15. This makes it easier for the water to penetrate into the cells of your body, so you are naturally better hydrated.

Being fully hydrated is one of the best things you can do for your body, because water is necessary for all the basic life functions, and we naturally lose about two liters a day. Many common ailments like feeling a lack of energy, headaches, and feeling hungry, are actually signs of dehydration.

When you drink clean, ionized water, you are drinking a powerful, natural antioxidant that cleanses on a cellular level. Hydroxyl ions (OH-) in the ionized water are electrically charged to neutralize free radicals. The Chanson website (ChansonAlkalineWater.com) claims that it helps for cholesterol problems, boosting energy, treating pain and mild injuries. If you set the alkalinity much higher, you can even

use the stuff to clean with. A good rule of thumb is to drink one ounce of water for every two pounds of your body weight per day to stay properly hydrated. When you feel tired, it is often because you are dehydrated.

Healthy Nuts

Nuts are a potent source of essential nutrition in your diet. Raw nuts are typically packed with protein, fiber and essential fats. I eat a half a cup of mixed raw nuts every day if I can. I put them into salads, mix them with my food, or add them to smoothies.

Some people can't eat nuts, depending on their genetic predisposition. It's important to check with your doctor, and if you happen have allergies to nuts, you will have to find alternatives.

For most people, though, it's a great, natural way to supplement your diet.

- **Almonds** are rich in calcium, the stuff we need for bone-building, and they're also high in vitamin E.
- **Brazil nuts** are a good source of the mineral selenium, which we need to produce the active thyroid hormone. Selenium also supports immunity and helps wounds to heal.
- **Hazelnuts** are a good source of folate, and Vitamin E which are important for maintaining healthy skin, hair and nails. The B vitamins are important in proper cell and energy metabolism. Hazelnuts are also a rich source of potassium, calcium and magnesium. The minerals provide many health benefits, including regulating a healthy blood pressure.
- **Macadamias** have one of the highest contents of the healthy mono-unsaturated fats. They are a rich source of fiber and make a useful contribution of minerals including magnesium, calcium and potassium.
- **Pistachios** are rich in vitamin B6, lutein and zeaxanthin, two antioxidants that play an important role in protecting the eyes. Pistachios also contain potassium and fiber. Usually these are roasted – and lots of the nutrients are lost. If you can find them raw, it's much better.

- **Pecans** are packed with plant sterols that are effective in lowering cholesterol levels. Pecans are also antioxidant-rich which helps prevent the plaque formation that causes hardening of the arteries. They're rich in oleic acid, the healthy fat found in olives and avocado. As a good source of vitamin B3 which helps us access the energy in our food.
- **Walnuts** contain antioxidants, and are also a good source of mono-unsaturated, heart-friendly fats. They're also rich in omega-3.

Exercise

Focusing on your exercise routine, whether it's weight training, cardio exercise or working on your frame is not optional. It's essential for your overall health, for your wellbeing and your long-term happiness. Remember, when we talked about the lymphatic system? You need to move your body to stimulate those ducts to empty out; otherwise the lymph has nowhere to go.

When you walk around in public, it should be obvious to you, if you pay attention, that most people are incredibly unhealthy, make poor dietary choices, and take better care of their cars than they do of their body.

You should always consult with your doctor before beginning or modifying your diet or starting an exercise program.

I've changed the way I exercise as I've gotten older. When I was younger I wanted to get to the right weight and body shape, so I needed to do more, but now it's more a matter of maintaining my ideal body condition. Once you've built your muscles, you really only have to maintain them.

Everybody that exercises will tell you that some days are harder than others. I just kind of go with the flow, without neglecting exercise, but I'm by no means a fanatic.

For cardio I use a treadmill. Some people prefer running outside, or using elliptical machines, which are easier on the knees. I have a Woodway 4front treadmill, and I love it. Three to five days a week I run two miles at a time. It takes twenty minutes, running at 6.3 miles per hour, it comes to just over two miles in distance. It makes my skin feel better, opens my nasal passages, my mind gets sharper, and it makes a huge difference in my life.

I only do about three days of weight training per week at this point in my life. I concentrate more on doing repetitions, and maintaining my physique, rather than building muscle.

Day 1

The first day I focus on doing my shoulders and abdominals. Depending on what kind of equipment is available at the gym I'm using, I change up my routine. I go to gyms in both Orlando, and South Florida, so it changes depending on where I am.

- Most often I do cable raises. I do three sets with the cables behind my back for each shoulder, and three more laterally. After that I do three sets of trapezius (trap) exercises. Each of these sets has about 20-30 repetitions in them, and although it's exhausting, I can get it all done in half an hour, or 45 minutes at most.
- On the same day I will work on my abdominals. Lying with my pelvis on an incline bench I usually do 3 sets of 20 to 30 reps on my lower back and abdominals.
- Then I move over to a machine to do the lateral obliques. I also do 3 sets of 20-30 reps on each side. The machine I like to use goes from side to side, but you can also use cables for that. Some machines work the upper torso, others the lower torso.
- The last exercises on this day are machine crunches – again, 3 sets of usually 30 repetitions.

Day 2

The second day of weight training is for my chest, triceps, back and biceps.

- For my chest I do 3 sets of 20 to 30 repetitions. Usually I bench press, or I'll use an incline if the gym has one. A lot of gyms don't have all the machines that others do. I prefer using the machines if I can, so I don't need a spotter.

- I do three sets of 20-30 repetitions of ‘peck decks’ or butterfly exercises, where you pull the bars of the machine towards your chest.
- For the triceps I either use the machines, seated or standing or cables. I do three sets of between 15 to 25 repetitions.
- I move over to the back. I do three sets of 15 to 25 “lat” pull down repetitions.
- Then I do three sets of seated upright rowing of 15 to 25 repetitions.
- And afterwards I do three sets of 15 to 25 repetitions of my biceps with free weights, cables or machines.

Day 3

The last exercise day is for doing my legs, and it only takes 15-20 minutes.

- I do 3 sets of 25 to 30 repetitions of leg press.
- Next come leg raises / extensions (quadriceps): 15-20 repetitions, in three sets.
- Leg curls 15 to 20 repetitions, in three sets.

When I was younger I cared about building strength and muscle mass, but as I’ve gotten older, I’m more interested in doing lots of repetitions, and simply maintaining my body.

I’m not huge, but I’m in good shape. I’m not perfect, but I’m happy with my body. I like the way I look and feel, and the ladies seem to like it too.

You’ve got to be proud of yourself, and the way you look. People still tell me I look like I’m in my late twenties or early thirties, and compared to the people I went to high school with, there’s an obvious difference.

When you’re happy, you’re more inclined to take care of yourself.

A Hopeful Future for Medicine

I'm always interested in things that give us hope for the future. There are so many problems, and the world is so complicated, that I think it's really important to hold on to a positive view of the future. To that end, I want to share something that I found incredibly interesting, and something that shapes my vision for the future of health care.

Ido Bachelet is a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts. He works with tiny 'robots' – to use the term very loosely, which are designed to combat disease.

'DNA origami' is a new technique for making structures from DNA, and it's way more than just a cool design concept. It can also be used to build devices that can seek out and destroy living cells – like cancer cells, for example.

"The nanorobots, as the researchers call them, use a similar system to cells in the immune system to engage with receptors on the outside of cells.

We call it a nanorobot because it is capable of some robotic tasks," says one of the authors of the study. Once the device recognizes a cell, he explains, it automatically changes its shape and delivers its cargo.

The researchers designed the structure of the nanorobots using open-source software, called Cadnano, developed by one of the authors — Shawn Douglas, a biophysicist at Harvard's Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering. They then built the bots using DNA origami.

The barrel-shaped devices, each about 35 nanometers in diameter, contain 12 sites on the inside for attaching payload molecules and two positions on the outside for attaching aptamers, short nucleotide

strands with special sequences for recognizing molecules on the target cell. The aptamers act as clasps: once both have found their target, they spring open the device to release the payload.”

(Katsnelson, 2012)

There was a movie made in 1966, starring Raquel Welch, called *Fantastic Voyage*. A brilliant Russian scientist develops a way to shrink humans, and other objects, for brief periods of time. The scientist, who is working in communist Russia, is transported by the CIA to America, but is attacked en route. In order to save the scientist, who has developed a blood clot in his brain, a team of Americans in a nuclear submarine is shrunk and injected into Benes' body. They have a finite period of time to fix the clot and get out before the miniaturization wears off.

It's a cool idea, and to think that technology, while not being able to shrink things yet, has come so far – is very encouraging. The system is highly targeted, so unlike chemotherapy, which also injures the body – with nanobots, there are almost no side effects at all.

Besides being fascinating – it makes you think about the future of medicine. Some people believe that technology will advance so far in the next few decades, that we will be able to prolong people's lives, and improve their quality of life exponentially.

Using similar nanobot technology, along with 3D printing, and other new advances, scientists are creating ingenious new treatments for a variety of health problems. These include cancer, fertility, blood disorders, ageing, reconstructive surgery – and much more besides. (Wang, 2017)

DNA can be influenced and guided to treat previously untreatable injuries and diseases – such as serious spinal injuries.

Pfeizer has started working together with Dr. Ido Bachelet on some of these technologies.

The point of all of this is hope.

We're on the verge of being able to prolong human life – possibly indefinitely. We're able to improve the quality of life for sick and disabled people in amazing ways.

If we're already able to regrow spines, and use revolutionary CRISPR gene editing techniques to remove genetic defects from embryos – we can only imagine what is possible. It's getting to the point where if you can last a few decades more, you might be able to live for hundreds of years.

If you think of the miracle of life, the way our bodies grow from nothing – there is a lot of hope.

The Challenge of the Healthcare System

In order to progress towards a world where healthy living becomes the norm, we first have a few challenges to overcome. People's mindsets need to be shifted from the current paradigm towards one that actually serves and benefits them.

Instead of a healthcare system that's designed for freeloaders and opportunists, we need to think of ways to reward people who take care of their health – people who are self-reliant.

The way our healthcare system operates today leaves us with much room for improvement. It's shocking to discover that 80% of the funding available for free healthcare is used by just 20% of the population.

If you look at what's really happening, it's plain to see that some individuals are openly abusing the system, and taking no personal responsibility for their health.

There are literally people who choose to eat themselves to death, and people who make the conscious choice to become morbidly obese. They are committing slow suicide by food. There are those who completely neglect their health, exercise, and common sense, scooting around in an electric scooter, connected to an oxygen tank, and refusing to take basic care of themselves. They choose to live however they want to, and then make full use of free healthcare to deal with the unpleasant consequences – creating more of a burden for taxpayers.

Why should healthy people – average, middle-class citizens and diligent taxpayers, have to carry that cost? A YouTube commenter recently talked about his financial situation on my YouTube channel. He makes \$70,000 a year, which is a pretty good salary for most Americans. His wife is a stay at home mom, and they have a mortgage. The government levied more taxes for Obamacare, so he is

subsidizing unhealthy people, but he doesn't earn enough to pay for medical insurance for his own family. How is that fair?

Before Obamacare, people who didn't have health insurance simply went to the emergency room to get free healthcare since by law hospitals must help people who come to the emergency room. After Obamacare, these people get free full-coverage healthcare while people like my YouTube viewer must pay for health insurance or pay the penalty for not having it, but their deductible is so high that they end up paying for useless coverage and must pay all healthcare expenses out of pocket. How is that fair, just or honorable?

MIT economics professor Jonathan Gruber became infamous when he told an audience at the University of Pennsylvania in November 2014 that Democrats required “the stupidity of the American voter” for Obamacare to become law.

He has stated publically, and you can watch the videos on YouTube where he admits this, the tax levies for Obamacare are purposefully and willfully convoluted to hide the fact it is a tax increase – and basically an excuse to increase taxes. There are a couple of YouTube clips with professor Gruber openly laughing at the system he helped create, which he shows is a way to get middle-class people to subsidize the healthcare of poor people – and the majority of people getting the benefits of the system are not eating healthy, not exercising, not taking care of themselves, sit at home and eat themselves to death. They're simply not self-reliant.

The *Washington Times* interviewed him, and he had the following comments:

“I think probably the most important thing experts would agree on is that we need a larger mandate penalty. We have individuals who are essentially free-riding on the system. They're essentially waiting until they get sick and then getting health insurance.” (Ernst, 2016)

As self-reliant human beings, we all need to take responsibility for our personal health.

In Summary

Following these simple guidelines for healthy living has made a huge change in my life. I feel like a new person, and almost never get sick. Mastering yourself is a combination of the right kind of mindset, combined with practical measures to live the best kind of life that you can.

It's basic common sense, and the path of wisdom.

If you're putting alkaline water and food into your body, it makes it easy for your body to neutralize the acids and the sugars, the proteins and carbs, the drinking, and the piece of cake that you had. When you give your body what it needs to maintain its balance – you're just not going to get sick as easily.

Take the common cold for example. There is such a build-up of bacteria and toxins in your body, that the emergency systems are triggered. Your body surrenders – it calls “uncle” – and produces mucus, cold sweats, a snotty nose, diarrhea, sores on your skin, scabs, dandruff, and boogers. If you never allow all those toxins to constantly build up, and if you're maintaining your perfect balance – the body can deal with pathogens – like the flu virus – much more easily.

Your body can maintain its healthy balance in chemistry, grow the healthy cells that it needs, and take care of unwanted, foreign bodies so much better.

“The body is a community made up of its innumerable cells or inhabitants.”

~ Thomas Edison

For me the moment of truth came the first time I looked at my living blood samples under the microscope. The evidence was undeniable.

You can literally see all the cholesterol, and all the toxins in your blood. You can tell when the blood looks natural and healthy, and you can clearly see when it isn't. Like I said, it was a paradigm shift.

You can feel the difference when you start changing the way you eat and drink. You don't get tired as easily, and you don't get sick all the time. Your mind functions better, and it's easier to stay fit.

And you look better, and stay young for longer. At the time of writing this book I'm pushing 48, and when people meet me, and ask my age, they don't believe me.

It's a result of just eating healthy, detoxing and exercising. I really started focusing on my diet in my late twenties to early thirties, and I've been constantly refining and learning new things over the years. Diet fads come and go, but it makes sense to eat a lot of green vegetables, and to cut out all the processed foods, red meat, and sugar. Pretty much everyone agrees on that, and most importantly, it's something you feel and can see in the mirror. A wise person once said, "Nothing tastes as good as healthy feels." You must exercise diet discipline to achieve and maintain optimum health. It's a way of life.

The reason that I've gone to such lengths to include all these details here is that changing your mindset about food can change your life. It can go a long way to helping you on your journey towards self-mastery. It's such an important area.

There's an analogy that ties all of these ideas together. Think of your body as a flesh garden.

Your body needs nutrients, it needs oxygen, and it needs to have the waste eliminated to be able to enjoy optimal health, longevity, and vitality.

If you're not healthy, you won't be happy.

If you're focused on your true calling in life, doing what you love, and loving what you do, you're naturally going to want to be healthy too. You will automatically find yourself starting to push out the toxins in your life. That includes toxic foods and drinks, as well as toxic people, and influences.

When you're on your natural path, you find yourself feeling more relaxed. You are naturally more inclined to meditate, your sleep becomes deep and peaceful, and you can just as easily focus on your work. Your mind is at peace, and your body falls into harmony too.

Whatever you observe in life, you're going to participate in.

When those toxic people show up, with truckloads of drama, they have a way of pulling you into the story, and infecting you with negativity.

When you're happy, you are going to tend to exercise more, and you're going to be more spiritually minded.

This is one of the reasons why I love living on the beach. If you visit my website, YouTube channel or social media, you'll notice the banner on top has a picture of the beach. There's a Tiki hut, palm trees, and some chairs. That's just me. That's why I live on the beach. I love being near the water.

Everything that I do has evolved to a more conscious and spiritual way of life. My relationships and friendships, the women that I have relationships with, the people that I spend my time with, the kinds of things that I work on, and the people I hire to work for me now all tend to be more spiritually-minded. The people I surround myself with now are all trying to lead as happy, and stress-free a life as possible. I want my surroundings to facilitate me being happy. I want to remain healthy, and in a peaceful, relaxed state. I want things in my life to enable me to live my life in my own way and to make it easy to cultivate a sense of inner peace.

To me, that's what real success means. It means being able to have ownership of your time, and how you spend it.

When you can get up every day and spend your time the way you want, you're going to be more inclined to go to the gym. You're going to be more inclined to spend 45 minutes juicing vegetables.

The healthier you are, the more mentally alert you're going to be. Work becomes easier and more pleasurable. The healthier you are, the happier you're going to be, and the more attractive you will be to other people.

You're going to become like a beacon of light to the people you meet in your life.

By combining the wisdom we've discussed here, with regards to healthy eating, taking supplements, oils, and alkaline water, with the advice from Dr. Epstein about the spine, you can basically redesign your experience of life. Living this way brings you back into your natural, healthy, positive state of mind – it makes the whole thing so much easier.

This is really what it's all about – having a life that facilitates you being in a peak state.

In that state you're happy and healthy, smiling a lot more – feeling as if you're making progress towards your goals. Think about it – why do people like hanging out with the captain of the football team, or the captain of the cheerleaders? It's because they tend to be attractive, and likeable. Whenever an alpha male or an alpha female walks into the room, people pay attention to what they're doing. They're like the silverbacks of the tribe, in a way.

The same psychology is at work when people are so obsessed with celebrities. They are the ones living the lives we all aspire to. They're rich, famous and beautiful. They hang out with beautiful people, date beautiful people, and marry beautiful people. They do such

interesting things, and own nice things. Almost everybody aspires to that – who doesn't want a life like that?

When you treat your body right, and give it what it needs to operate on peak levels, these kinds of changes start to become easier to make. You're more focused, and more motivated to live on your own terms, and to get what you need.

You're going to make the effort to buy healthy food instead of the convenience of going to McDonalds for a burger.

I think McDonald's food tastes amazing. I don't know what they put in it, but I love it. I haven't eaten it in years, though. The problem is, half an hour after eating it, I feel horrible. If you do eat that kind of food, and the same thing happens, just suck down a green juice. You'll be amazed at how much better you feel. It wakes you right up, and makes you feel great.

The times when you decide to indulge in the good life, drinking, bong hits for Jesus, eating that cake, or the junk food – you're going to start to feel a little run down. You can feel the effects of putting all that garbage into your system.

That's the beauty of the healthy eating I've talked about here. You can actually feel the difference in your body. It's undeniable. When you try it for yourself, you notice an immediate difference in the way you look, feel and act. These are important principles for health, and healthy living, and I've talked about some of them in my first book too.

At the end of the day it's up to you. You don't have to follow exactly what I do – I've mentioned it here because this is what works for me. You might want to change it to suit your body, and your way of life.

It makes a huge difference in your life, so I encourage you to check with your doctor, and change your paradigm about healthy eating. Try some of these methods, even if you just start making green juice,

drinking two or three glasses a day, for at least a week, or even better, do it for 30 days. Replace one of your daily meals with Corey's Green Alkaline Smoothie for 30 days. You'll see and FEEL the difference that it makes for yourself.

New Business Partners

“Impossible is a word to be found only in the dictionary of fools.”

~ Napoleon Bonaparte

A lot of internal changes were occurring simultaneously in my life during the period between 2004 and 2005. It was the start of a brand new chapter, and the end of an old one.

It was in February 2004, in Jackson Hole Wyoming that I had seen Tony do the intervention I described, which had planted the seeds of an idea in my mind and heart. During that summer my mother died, and we went to the racecar school, and I got my introduction to the network chiropractic events. The changes going on within me were gathering momentum, and my life was beginning to unfold in ways that I could never have imagined.

As I became more peaceful, relaxed, and aligned to my true life's path, my partnership arrangements were becoming more and more uncomfortable, and difficult to bear.

In March of 2004 I got involved with Pedro and his advertising system. We started working on that, together with the new kinds of sales copy, looking at different kinds of television commercials to create.

At the time we were doing 30-minute infomercials, along with 30-second commercials, during the local Television news. If the infomercials weren't changed at least once a year, we found that people tended to lose interest. The ads became stale, and people got used to seeing them, but if we refreshed them, the leads and the sales numbers started picking up again. Each time we did a new

infomercial people would want to tune in and watch, and the phones would start ringing again. But the effectiveness of this strategy was tapering off, and we needed to change tactics completely.

I was working with Pedro, who was a Platinum Partner, and seemed like a sharp guy. I wanted to bring in a higher socio-economic class of buyer. We were competing against a lot of buyers with the lower income groups, and we were hoping to attract better business.

It was in May of 2004 that I went on the Platinum Partner event to the Maltese Islands, and Gozo.

I remember flying into Milan, Italy, waiting for my connection to Malta. As I entered the airport, I walked into a thick wall of smoke. At the time everyone was allowed to smoke in that airport. People were just puffing everywhere. A lot of Platinum Partners flew in at the same time as I did, and 40 or 50 of us were sharing a flight to the Island.

The Platinum Partner events were always planned out ahead of time, but the organizers liked to keep many of the details under wraps until we arrived. We were in for some wonderful surprises on this trip.

On Malta there are these prehistoric, megalithic temples, some of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. They were built approximately between 3600 BC and 700 BC on the island. It's an awe-inspiring sight to see.

Malta is basically a lump of limestone in the Mediterranean and covers just over 100 square miles (300 square km), if you include the outlying islands of Gozo and Comino. There is stone absolutely everywhere.

We actually had these Russian helicopters take us over from Malta to Gozo, and we all stayed in beautiful five star resorts. The buildings are all built out of these amazing yellow sandstone and limestone blocks. It was quite incredible.

We stayed out there for a few days, attending events, and then we took speedboats back to Malta, via the iconic Azure Window, which features in a number of movies, including *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and the hit series *Game of Thrones*. Sadly the landmark collapsed into the sea early in 2017. We were lucky to see it when we did.

On our last day there, they took us to one of the oldest temples in the world. (Many of these ancient buildings have been claimed as the oldest freestanding structures on Earth). Nobody knows exactly who built them, and there's still an ancient altar there. There was a trip to a Spanish fort, with a banquet, and everyone was dressed in period costume. It took place in a kind of castle, and there were people dressed up as knights, and one dressed as the king.

During these trips, the wheels started turning in my subconscious mind and in my heart. Something was at work, transforming my inner machinery.

I became more and more concerned about world events, and started thinking about getting involved in influencing the world for the better in some way. I wanted to be a force for good in the world, and an agent for positive change. It was a sense of compassion, and altruism welling up inside.

In my hotel room my colleagues, Peter, Cristina, Mark and I were all talking about politics, and world events, and I had this odd sensation come over me. At the time, it actually felt to me like a calling that I was meant to become the president at some future point in my life.

We all started talking about it, and Mark, (who was a former Green Beret), and I discussed it at length. He told me stories about America's involvement in South America in the 1980's, and how we had been a force for change during that conflict.

In my opinion, a true leader leads from the front, not from behind. I was filled with absolute certainty that I would serve in an official capacity as a leader of people some day in the future.

When I mentioned it to my colleagues at work, back home, they all thought I was crazy, unrealistic, or just plain conceited. I saw their eyes become really big when I said it. I later learned through the grapevine that some of them thought I had lost my mind completely. The truth is that I was just sharing something that had happened, and something that I believed in.

Looking at it today, I'm happy with the way my life has turned out, and I feel no pressing need to get into politics anytime soon. Maybe someday I will, maybe I won't.

People who know me are aware that I'm happy that Donald Trump got elected, as president, and that I believe in personal liberty and personal responsibility. Since that time, though, my life's path has evolved in a different direction.

I've found that helping others by coaching is more aligned with me, and it's a valuable way to help people. Thirteen years after that event, I don't feel exactly the same way anymore. I teach a lot about self-reliance instead – and if people are motivated and enabled to do what they're meant to do – that's a real force for change in the world. If people get on with things on their own, following their true path, there isn't much need for leadership anyway. The true measure of a leader is not how many followers they have, but how many leaders they create.

I see people say on my YouTube channel: "Corey Wayne for President," but I'm assuming most of it is just as a joke. The only way I would ever run for President is if I got drafted to serve by the American People as a result of my life's work and the value I have added to their lives. Serving in office should be a temporary burden,

something a true experienced Patriot does reluctantly out of a sense of duty, not a permanent career choice.

I mention it here because that's the kind of energy that was entering my life at the time, and that's where my mind was at. It was a product of the hugely inspiring forces that were at work in my life at the time.

I came back from Malta in May, and during the summer I had the experiences in Carmel, California with Donny Epstein, which I talked about.

As I was becoming more peaceful and relaxed, my business partnerships were becoming really complicated.

The way my partners behaved in this situation points to something really important that I've noticed about people, and that I've learned as I've gone through life:

Human beings tend to attack in other people what they struggle within themselves.

Whatever people are disconnected with, or what they can't see clearly in themselves, they immediately seem to become fixated with it in other people.

If you're a happy, wealthy, successful person, and you come across another person who isn't, they end up draining you, and attacking you. It's as if they want to bring you down to their level. They will always zero in on the flaws they imagine seeing in you - but that are actually a part of themselves, and they're blind to it.

My employee, Andy was a perfect example. Consumed by his own deep-seated feelings of insecurity, he loved to attack me – except he went about it in an underhanded way. He was constantly undermining me, lying behind my back, and completely absorbed in his own ego. He brashly believed that he was the sole reason for the

success of my company. When I explained to him that the company was successful long before he arrived, he found it hard to swallow.

In the end I decided to fire him, despite the fact that he was the top producer. Weighing up the pros and cons, it just made sense. It took a chunk of revenue out of the business, but I no longer felt the need to be surrounded by people who enjoyed ego wars and underhanded business politics.

At the same time Pedro's advertising system was starting to bear fruit, but it wasn't good for business. The market was changing, and the new advertising just wasn't helping. If things continued on this track, I realized that six months down the line I would be in trouble. I started thinning out the number of staff members we were employing.

Around October or November I met Brian on a Platinum Partner event in Costa Rica. I told Brian about my ideas, expressing that I was thinking of running for president one day. He had sold his last company for one hundred million dollars, and was very good at business. He told me that he wanted to help me run for president, and we developed what I thought was a solid relationship.

Brian flew down to see me in Orlando, and to review my company's books. At that point in his career he wanted to be an equity investor in other companies. He was talking about creating an equity fund to help the businesses he invested in to grow to the next level.

I was looking into different business models that would help us adapt to the uncertain future of the property market. Up to that point my business strategy had been to provide everything for the people who worked with me. I provided a great office space, and support staff. The real estate and mortgage brokers that worked for me only needed to focus on selling – everything else was taken care of. I even provided the leads for them, by means of advertising. I knew that if I

was going to expand nationwide, I would need to change the way I did business.

So I started looking at other businesses, with different models, that had successfully franchised and gone national. I found one company that was doing exactly what I had envisioned.

That company's model allowed people to earn commissions, and offered them a share of the company. If you successfully brought agents into the company, for example, you would get a cut of the profits. It provided security, because as you got older, and eventually retired, you could continue to get a residual income. I thought it was a good model to work from as a base.

Our model would be different because we would have people there who could handle the closing of loans, and any agents would just pay a fee per file. They could also lease offices from us if they wanted to.

I was going to get out of the lead generation business.

As I started changing, and implementing the first stages of the new model, the income was declining from our current business. This was the point where James came to me and insisted that I buy him out of the company. He told me that he wanted to get the business appraised. He was expecting Paul and I to write him a fat settlement check, so he could go on his way.

My business partners were suffering financially too, with the conditions in the housing market the way they were. It was becoming more and more difficult to find houses to flip. Foreclosure properties were getting scarce because investors were starting to buy houses for smaller and smaller profit margins. When they did find properties to flip, the advertising wasn't working as well to sell them again.

When business partners go their separate ways, the first partner to get bought out generally gets the best deal, but James didn't really have a

head for business, he was more of a sales guy. His ideas about what the business was worth were basically just wishful thinking.

The two of them insisted on spending more than \$5,000 to get the business appraised, even though I told them that the business was worth less than they were expecting. They went ahead anyway, and got the numbers done, and afterwards they tried to get me to eat some of the costs of the appraisal. I refused, of course.

Paul and I discussed the future of the business privately, and he told me that he felt sick of working with James too. James had this bad habit of storming into the office, when things didn't go his way, and threatening you with violence unless he got what he wanted. Over the years there had been so many confrontations, that Paul was finally sick of it.

There was no way of getting past it. Things had to change, and we all agreed on it – it was the end of the road.

I would keep the Real Estate and Mortgage Companies. James would take the Holding Company that was buying all the foreclosure properties. He would continue to find properties, and real estate dealers to flip them to. Paul would start his own brand new Mortgage Company, and focus strictly on hard equity loans, occasionally doing a flip here and there.

We decided on our new company names, and set things in motion to make the changes. Slowly the business slimmed down, until there were only one or two of my top producers left – Joe and Rick.

Sometime in 2005 I had a long conversation with them. These two guys really wanted to get a stake in the company. At one point in the heated discussion, Rick said, "I'm putting some stakes in the ground," banged his fist on the table, and stormed out of the meeting, as if he already owned a share in the company.

It was a clear warning sign to me.

Joe had always been a good producer, but he could never keep anyone on his team. They would always end up leaving. He was easy to get along with, but couldn't bring people on board who could produce in the long run.

Rick was far from perfect too. He was a constant source of headaches, with more than one client in the past having filed complaints with FREC (the Florida Real Estate Commission.) I would have to spend thousands of dollars on attorney fees, which Rick then had to pay back out of his commissions. He had this habit of talking really fast when things went wrong, and he just wasn't the kind of person you could trust as a partner.

I was thinking: "The last thing I want to do, after going through all the pain of dissolving this partnership, is to get involved in the same situation again."

James moved into the small house on the shared property, and Paul leased a new office. I was renting a new office space in College Park, ten minutes away from our old offices, which were now vacant, and up for sale.

We moved everything out, and I decided that I was done with all that bullshit.

After much thought, I had decided that I wanted to work only with people who were heart-centered, spiritually minded, easy to get along with, and serious about growth and success.

I worked out a new partnership deal with Brian and Pedro, because I really thought they were those kinds of people. I was willing to offer them equity in the business, and I envisioned a good future for us. But it wasn't going to work out that way.

I later figured out that Pedro was actually little more than a sales consultant, selling his advertising system. The real reason he was on those Tony Robbins events was to find customers to sell to – the

kinds of people that could afford to invest in what he was selling. The other Platinum Partners that had bought from him, and implemented his system, had all since fired him. Looking back over it now, I can see that Pedro was looking to walk right into a business that was doing really well, grossing \$6-7 million a year, and that he didn't actually have much to offer in return.

There were some other troubling things going on too. Brian and Pedro spent a lot of time together, and it was causing strife on the home front. Pedro's wife was constantly whispering in his ear, trying to get him to leave the partnership, because she thought Brian was going to destroy their marriage. Brian was in the process of his third divorce, after having an affair with a married woman. He and Pedro talked about open relationships a great deal, and Pedro's wife was fighting to save their marriage, urging him to change the kinds of people he was hanging out with.

One time Pedro was sitting with us in a meeting, and he kept avoiding taking a call from his wife. After sending the call to voicemail four times in a row, he finally answered.

"Hi Honey, I'm running a meeting. Is there an emergency?"

"Oh no, I just wanted to see how you were doing."

She was obviously jealous, needy, insecure and paranoid about their relationship. She wanted to know if he was spending time with other women, which was something that had happened in the past.

I've learned in life that liars and cheaters believe that everyone is just like them. They believe that, given the right circumstances, everybody will cheat or lie. It's clear to me now, but at the time I couldn't see it.

Brian once told me that all of his previous business partners hated his guts. He'd been successful in the past with real estate, but when the market went into the shitter, he had to file for bankruptcy and start all

over again. We'd be talking, and he would tell me about a company that he'd sold off, and he would say "Oh by the way, if you ever run into that guy, he absolutely hates my guts." In essence he had fucked over everyone he'd been in business with in the past. I never heard him tell one story about a relationship that ended amicably, or previous business partners that even wanted anything to do with him.

The way I rationalized it all away was by telling myself that it was in the past, he was obviously younger then, and that times had changed. But I was wrong.

People don't really change. They may become better versions of themselves – better or worse, but in essence people generally are who they are. If they're a scoundrel when you meet them, or they were one in the past, they're pretty much always going to be a scoundrel – perhaps, at best, a better version of that scoundrel, but a scoundrel nonetheless. If that's who they are – that's just who they are.

Pedro was a liar and a cheater – looking back at it now, it is plain as day, but at the time I didn't want to believe it. He was always saying:

"We do everything with honor and integrity."

When people continuously say things like that – it should make the hairs stand up on the back of your neck. It's a big red flag, telling you that something is not as it should be. They're obviously trying to cover something up. Honest people don't need to justify themselves – it should be obvious, and plain for everyone to see whether or not you're honorable. People who need to 'sell' their integrity are obviously better at sales than at keeping their promises.

Unfortunately, as I mentioned before, I had suspended my powers of critical judgment, because I had met these people in 'Tony World.' I was about to learn a very hard lesson because of it.

Pedro was expecting to step in and get a third of my company, along with all the profits and revenue that went along with it – offering

nothing but promises. In theory, he was going to be the team builder, and head recruiter. He used to tell me that it was his calling. He'd already brought in two agents, and had built teams in the past, and I believed him.

Then came that fateful holiday when I went on the trip with my girlfriend to Paris, which I mentioned in the introduction. When I got back on the following Monday morning, the new offices were looking organized, with new cubicles that had just been installed. The sale of the old office building had fallen through, but I wasn't too worried about it – thinking that we had plenty of time to find new buyers. That's when Pedro called me in, and said that he wanted to talk.

"I've got some news." He said, out of the blue, "I'm out of here."

"What do you mean?" I asked in disbelief.

"Well, my wife and I have jobs at this other company... I wish you the best of luck. See you around."

Just like that, Pedro had decided to leave the company. I was stunned. I couldn't believe it. If I had known what his plans were, I never would have dissolved my partnership with my previous partners, and I most certainly wouldn't have leased a 10,000 square foot office building.

Brian was to come down in a week with the paperwork for our new business agreement, which the three of us were going to sign. I called him to tell him about what Pedro had decided.

"Screw him, we'll do it without him." Brian reassured me, telling me that we could still continue with our plans. We would simply hire someone else, and pay them a salary. There was nothing to worry about.

This was around October 2005, and at least for the next few days I had peace of mind. Then, literally two days before Brian was to fly out, I got another call from him.

That's when he dropped the bomb on me.

That was the dreaded call – the one with which our story began. That one terrible conversation changed everything. During the space of that short dialogue all my plans, all my hopes for the future – my whole world collapsed.

“Corey – you should probably file for bankruptcy.” Brian said, almost nonchalantly.

There were electrical impulses all over my body, and I was in an utter state of shock. I called my girlfriend, and then took off and went home. I tried to chill out and digest what had just happened, but instead I just stood there, staring at the water on the lake and feeling sick to my stomach.

Just one year before I had a hugely successful business, and now I was staring at financial ruin. It felt like I was totally finished. It was inconceivable.

I had maybe \$25,000 in the bank, and plenty of bills to pay. The payment on the office building alone was \$17,000 split three ways, and I had a house of my own, plus a boat and cars to pay off. I had plenty of equity in real estate, but my monthly expenses suddenly far outweighed my projected income.

I was standing there, staring at the water thinking: “*What the fuck am I going to do now?*”

Life has a way of making things happen, when you least expect it. I started honestly considering my options.

One option was to bust my ass and sell enough real estate and mortgages to rescue the business – I knew it was possible, but the

real question was – did I really and truly *want* to continue with real estate? I loved renovating homes, and building things, but the real estate business was no more than a business opportunity. My heart wasn't truly in it anymore.

The real estate market wasn't looking very good at the time, and it would be tough going. It was still a 'seller's market,' but the game had completely changed.

In a lot of ways, what I suddenly had was an opportunity to take a completely new direction in life. As terrible as this disaster was – it was also as if something was pushing me into a different life path. It was uncomfortable, no question about it, but somehow it also felt inevitable, and necessary.

There's an interesting question that everyone should ask themselves at some point – and perhaps especially when faced with a situation like this:

If you somehow knew that it was utterly impossible to fail – what would you choose to do?

The first thing that popped into my mind was helping people. It was like a fleeting image.

I suddenly remembered something I had seen. One of the trainers that I knew from Tony Robbins, who had worked on the Wealth Mastery event, had shown a couple of people how to use stock trading software. It triggered a strong train of thought in me.

The image of mentoring people just came into my head, and all at once, in that moment I made the decision to do exactly what my heart was urging me to do. I would become a mentor, a coach.

Almost instantly my back started to become really hot. I became aware of odd sensations in my body, almost as if something was relaxing and opening up, allowing the energy to flow. I wouldn't say

it was a ‘spiritual’ experience, and there was a definite physiological aspect to it. My whole body seemed to respond to this idea, as if it was saying: “Yes, let’s do that!” All the tension that had been locked up, for who knows how long, was released all of a sudden. It is as if I made the decision with my whole body, mind and heart.

Interestingly, when I later talked to my bookkeeper, and I told her what I had decided to do, she wasn’t surprised at all. She told me that she had noticed a year ago that my heart wasn’t in the real estate business, and had expected some kind of change from me.

Plenty of other people that heard the news agreed with her. They could all tell that a change had been brewing in me. The enthusiasm and passion had gone out of the way I had been working – as if I had been playing a role, instead of really being present in the moment. There was no emotional power in what I had been doing, for the longest time. The people who knew me well could see it clearly – even though I couldn’t see it, at the time.

I wasn’t paying attention to it, because mentally I was focused on what had to be done from day to day.

A buddy of mine went through a similar experience. After becoming involved in the Platinum Partnership, he decided to sell his businesses, and do something completely different with his life – something more fulfilling. When we talked about it in 2007, he told me something that I felt was really profound. He said:

“Corey, you would never have let go of your business, unless it had been completely ripped away from you.”

I thought that was totally fucking true. As I sat there on the couch, it felt like my spine was loosening up. All the joy and enthusiasm that I had been missing, was suddenly seeping back into my life, through this strange, momentous experience.

I realized the truth in what Tony Robbins once said, many years before:

“Your greatest resource is your resourcefulness.”

When your back is totally against the wall, and you feel like it’s the end of the line, and it feels like there’s no way forward, all you’re really lacking is another idea. When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at begin to change.

Instead of looking at it as if my life was over, I started to look at it as a new beginning. I started to think of it as if life was handing me a clean slate. I was free of my business partners, and my commitments. I still had a few people working for me in the office building, true enough, but was that really a big problem? What was the downside of all of this really?

All my equity was tied up in my properties, which was difficult, but not impossible to deal with. I owned two cars – a BMW X5 and an Infinity Q45, a boat, and my jet skis. All things considered, I still had plenty of options. It was going to be a difficult adjustment, but if I looked at it in the right way, it was also the perfect opportunity to start afresh.

I’ve always enjoyed the story of how Elon Musk started SpaceX, and although my own journey has been quite different, I can relate to his determination, his business mindset, and the idea of *First Principles*.

When you look at things from a certain perspective, the impossible becomes possible.

Lessons about First Principles from SpaceX

The one major distinction that sets Elon Musk apart from other entrepreneurs is that he simply doesn't allow the possibility of failure as a viable option.

It isn't part of his usual thought process. It doesn't matter if it means going up against the banking systems of the world (like when he started PayPal), or going up against the entire aerospace industry (when he launched SpaceX) or going up against the US auto industry (when he started Tesla). It doesn't matter that other people think it's impossible, or that it's a bad idea. If he believes it can be done, or should at least be tried, he simply focuses on getting things done, regardless of the circumstances.

When he started SpaceX he had limited funds from the PayPal days. He had an ambitious vision, though. He wanted to put greenhouses on Mars, complete with plants. There would be cameras on board so you could watch plants grow on another planet. He thought the idea would inspire people's imagination, and provide some much-needed public enthusiasm for space exploration. When he made enquiries about what it would cost, using NASA, it came to a staggering figure – somewhere between \$200-400 million. Musk's budget was closer to \$30 million, but he didn't let that stop him, as just about every other sane person on the planet would.

Musk said this in an interview with Kevin Rose's YouTube channel, Foundation 20:

"I think it's important to reason from first principles rather than by analogy. The normal way we conduct our lives is we reason by analogy, we are doing this because it's like something else that was done, or it is like what other people are doing.

With first principles you boil things down to the most fundamental truths, the raw materials... and then reason up from there."

(Baer, 2015)

Put another way, forcing yourself to look at the fundamental facts of a situation can help you develop your own perspective on how to solve problems rather than defaulting to the way the rest of the world thinks.

When Musk and his team were trying to estimate how much the first SpaceX rockets would cost, they could have just looked at the products on the market. The first-principles method was crucial for the start of SpaceX.

Instead of thinking like everyone else, they figured out what the necessary parts of a rocket were, and then found out how much the raw materials of those parts would cost. The result was startling: SpaceX could build a rocket for about 2% of the typical price.

Over the years, the rocket industry had become like an inverted pyramid, with all this bureaucracy at the top, and very few actual producers of parts at the bottom. When looking at it from the bottom up, he realized there were far cheaper ways to accomplish the same thing. He had to go through tons of red tape, and contractors and subcontractors, until he found the actual individuals who made the parts.

When the project was underway, things didn't work perfectly from the start. Three rockets blew up in a row, and Musk's budget was stretched to the limit. He was borrowing money from friends to pay his rent. If the fourth rocket didn't work, he would be ruined, financially. He had nothing left.

He was close to a nervous breakdown on the launch countdown, though he seldom shows it, and when the rocket launched successfully, he breathed the biggest sigh of relief in his life.

It worked. The rocket didn't blow up, and Elon Musk changed the world a little bit with his actions, his belief in himself, and his unique

way of looking at things. Instead of doing things the same way everyone else did, he built rockets, and later electric cars. He used a different mindset, based on first principles, putting raw materials into one end of the factory, and sending out finished cars or rockets on the other side. Even the Chinese admitted that they couldn't match his cost savings.

In his own words:

“Being an entrepreneur is like eating glass and staring into the abyss of death.”

Getting back to my own story, that's a good description of my state of mind, and the place I was in, emotionally as I was sitting on the couch.

What was I going to do?

Making My Mind Up

“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

It was a time for me to go back to first principles.

I knew from my experience that no solution was going to be an overnight thing. If I became a coach, I wouldn't have a book out, and be giving speeches in front of thousands of people in the very near future. It would take time. So I started boiling it all down to the basics.

When your back is against the wall, financially, you need to go back to living the way you did when you were a college student. First Principles. It's amazing how little you need to actually survive, if you just focus on the pure, bare basics of life.

Up until that point in my life I had an absolutely perfect credit rating. Now, though, I probably had a couple of hundred thousand dollars in lines of credit that I had personally guaranteed. Pedro had also forged my signature, and borrowed \$50,000, using my name as a personal guarantee, without my permission.

I had lots of equity in the office building and in my house, but I wasn't able to make the mortgage payments on both, but we were in a really superheated market. I decided not to make any more payments on my house, and to put it on the market. The office was already up for sale.

I had started doing additions to my house. I had a four-car garage, with a guest apartment above it, where you could sit on the porch and

see the lake. My plan had been to move in there, and build my dream house on the property, where I would settle down and raise kids with my wife.

I had stopped the construction five or six months before. Most of the work was already done on the guesthouse and garage, but I had to delay the project when finances had started to get tight. The neighbors across the street were already pissed off that the job was taking so long, and they had called the city building department. They were pressuring me to finish the job too.

The real money was in the office building. If I could sell that I would be able to pay off my debts and have enough to live off.

About two or three weeks after I put my house on the market a woman showed up to look at it. Her business niche was buying high-end properties and fixing them up to rent them out. She loved the house, and made an offer to buy almost straight away. I sold my Infinity, and my jet skis. I sold my furniture and paintings. My phone rang off the hook, with people coming to look at things to buy.

Two weeks later the deal was signed and closed, and my expenses were shaved by \$8,000 a month. I got \$50,000 from selling all the stuff that I had put up for sale.

I discussed my lease on the new office building with the owners of the building, apologizing for my part in the hassle, and they were really nice about everything. I explained that I couldn't make the payments, but with the improvements I had made already, they were willing to forego what I owed them. They worked out a deal with the leasing company and they got to keep the cubicles. That meant I didn't have to pay the office lease anymore, which was a huge relief.

One of the guys that I had recruited some time ago was doing really well with his mortgage clients. He and his fiancée, who was also a very successful real estate agent, bought some of my furniture, and

continued working under my mortgage lenders license for a year or two.

The profits from that helped me too. At least for the next year and a half, I was set.

“Close your eyes to the start, and contemplate the end.”

~ Rumi

Setting My Sights on a Worthy Goal

Looking back at the whole ordeal I had gone through, and the lessons I had learned in life, I was thinking of how I could best help people. What did I have to offer the world? What valuable knowledge was I in possession of that could help others along the way?

I decided to start by writing a dating and relationship guide for men. I had noticed that most of the guides out there are written for, and read by women, with very few of them aimed at guys. It's a subject I had been interested in for some time, and I had mastered it in my own life, and felt confident that I could help others achieve the same results.

Most men struggle to understand women, and relationships. Even the father of modern psychology, Sigmund Freud, admitted that his 'understanding of women was notoriously inadequate.' He couldn't figure out what women want. He said once to Marie Bonaparte: "The great question that has never been answered, and which I have not yet been able to answer, despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is What does a woman want?" (Jones)

I felt that I had some of the answers, and that I could offer self-help to guys who wanted to develop satisfying relationships or simply date and keep the kind of women they had always dreamed of.

I was in a really great relationship with my English girlfriend, around this time of my life. We suited each other perfectly, and we never argued. Even though we've gone our separate ways since then, we're still close friends today. She used to call me "Quarry" which evolved to "Qoi" and these days she sometimes still calls me "Quoiroooo."

When I sold up everything, and simplified my life, and hung out at my dad's for a couple of months, she would come and visit me for a couple of months at a time. She decided around the same time to go back to school and become a chiropractor. The only way she could

move over permanently, and we could stay together, was to get married. That simply wasn't an option for us at the time. I didn't know when my business was going to take off. I broke up with her because the long distance thing wasn't going to work, but we dated casually for some time.

I felt the best way to help people was to use what I had learned, and teach guys how to become successful at attracting and keeping the kind of women they had always wanted, but never were able to land or keep. I wanted to teach them about pickup, dating, relationships and how to attract the kind of woman that knocks your socks off. Most men don't attract those kinds of women into their lives. At this stage of my life I had finally figured out how to do it repeatedly and consistently, and it completely changed my life.

It had taken me until I was thirty-one before I was able to finally learn how to attract and keep what I considered to be a "unicorn," or perfect 10 type of girlfriend. My English girlfriend was my second relationship with a "unicorn." For my whole life up until my late twenties, I didn't know enough about how to date that kind of woman without getting 'friend-zoned' or blown off after a couple of dates. After much personal experience, and learning a lot from other experts, I was finally able to attract the caliber of woman I had always wanted to. Now people would look at my girl, as I walked down the street with her, and wonder, "how the hell did that guy get a girl like that? What has that guy got?"

I started working on my first book in November 2005.

I was expecting to make a huge success of my new career in no time at all. I was thinking that the Law of Attraction would almost magically get me to the point where I was making the same kind of income that I had been, pretty soon.

What remained of all my stuff fit into about six boxes. I kept it in the garage of another previous girlfriend of mine. I packed the rest in my

car and drove down to Delray Beach, where my dad lived, and moved in there until I could figure out my next move.

It took me about six weeks to complete the book, and it was finished in January 2006. Then it was time to take it to market, and figure out all the ins and outs of self-publishing.

I had no marketing experience in this line of work. Until that time I'd been successful with TV ads, the yellow pages, bus bench ads, direct mail, radio, billboards and the typical real estate marketing strategies. One sale would bring in \$20,000 in commission.

Marketing a book, however, was something completely new. You have to sell a lot of books to make anywhere near what you would make in real estate. I didn't know how to generate leads that originated from the Internet and that successfully converted into sales. When I was in real estate our advertising drove people to our website where they could search for properties or apply for a loan online. We had a sales process to contact them afterward and eventually set up an appointment to sell them in person.

I started playing around with Google Pay-per-Click, trying to find my way. I was losing money on it. If I spent \$500 boosting traffic to my website, the returns weren't comparable. I had no idea of the ordeal I was in for.

I was trying to figure out how to convey my value proposition to people, in a way that they could see the value in it, so they would buy the book, and hire me as a coach. I had the tools, and the skills. I knew how to coach and mentor people and get predictable and repeatable results, but I didn't know how to reach them.

Steve Jobs once explained, in his book with Walter Isaacson, how you're never able to connect the dots going forward. It's only years later that you can see how everything lined up, just absolutely perfectly, to get you where you want to be.

In the late 1990's, when I was still married, I remember reading Edgar Cayce, where he talks about helping people, and living a life of service to others. I started thinking about how to actually do that. My wife (at the time), and I were both raised Catholic. I was spiritual but not religious, and not really into going to church or organized religion, but I would have to go during Easter and Christmas, just to keep the family happy.

I contacted the church in 1996, when I had some extra time, and felt like I wanted to give back to the community. The church put me in touch with a woman, who called me soon after that. Her name was Beverley, and she was one of the nicest, warmest, kindest human beings I've ever met. When I explained what I wanted to do, she told me:

“Corey this might sound weird, but I've been praying every night for the last couple of weeks. I have this program in mind, which I've called Outreach Love. I want to help and mentor ‘at risk’ kids, and I really need somebody to help me out. I think you're exactly what the Lord sent for me.”

Beverly did most of the work, and I was there more for moral support than anything else, but I wanted to contribute, so I helped her found this program for elementary school kids.

Outreach Love worked with kids who came from unstable families, with very little parental supervision. There were broken homes, drug addicts, and the kids just really needed someone to guide and love them.

We were tutors, helpers, and friends for them. Every other week I was willing to spend a Saturday helping her with the kids. I had two different kids that I would mentor, really just sitting and talking, and making the kids feel as if there was someone who actually gave a damn.

One of the kids I was working with was treated really horribly at home. His mother's boyfriend was a drug addict, and his family beat down on him verbally, calling him 'stupid' and making him feel worthless all the time.

When you honestly present yourself to a kid as a human being, and talk about how you overcame your own problems, you can make a real connection. There's nothing like it when you see a young person's eyes light up.

The Principle of that school was a really caring person too, and he looked out for the kinds of kids that had nobody else to look out for them. I helped with the program for three or four years, but eventually my business took up all my time, and I had to stop helping.

In a way I was already a coach. It was natural, and innate in me.

About seven or eight years later I met one of the kids I had helped, and when we spoke I was really proud about the way he had turned out.

I was already on the path to becoming a coach, even though I didn't know it. It felt right, and I wanted to follow my heart. I wanted to give back to the community, and do nice things for other people because I care about them.

Going back to the basic human needs – if you remember, the most important basic need to fulfill is the need to be of service. Once you take care of that, all the other needs fall into line, and everything else in your life seems to fall into place.

You have to figure out *what* it is that you want. Then you've got to figure out *why* you want it.

Finding Your True Calling

To come back to the insights from the Steve Jobs biography – if you're not doing what you love, if you don't absolutely believe in it, if it's not a burning desire, your calling, and what you've been put on this earth to do – then it's the wrong thing, and you need to keep looking for it.

What I do with my clients nowadays, when they're considering a change in their life or trying to figure out their purpose, is get them to make a list of the things that they absolutely love.

Things that they like aren't on the list. It has to be something that they're really enthusiastic and passionate about. Something that is emotionally compelling to them. I don't want to hear about likes. On a scale of one to ten, where ten is what you love the most and can't imagine anything more exciting, fulfilling or compelling, I don't bother about the fives or the eights, I only want to hear about all the tens.

I call these a person's *Driving Force Needs*.

The things you love should just flow right out of you. For example, when I created a list like that for myself, it looked something like this:

- I love self-help
- I love learning, reading and growing
- I love eating healthy, and studying health
- I love helping other people
- I love solving complex problems, and making the world a better place.

- I love mentoring people, and using my highs and lows in life to help them find a path of their own in life.

That means I'm doing exactly what I'm supposed to be doing, and following my own path to self-actualization.

The average person will list between 5 and 15 items on a list like this. The idea is to find a way to align your purpose in life, and what you love, with what you're actually doing every day.

For some people the list just flows. Others have a lot of bullshit, stories that they tell themselves, and limiting beliefs in the way, and they fight the process tooth and nail.

I had a session with a very successful medical doctor just recently. He was unhappy with his daily routine, and considering a career change and wanted to spend more time inventing, building and perfecting medical equipment. After I went through the process with him, we realized that his real problem was simply time management.

He actually loved his profession, but the trouble was doing a lot of things that he really didn't want to do every day, things that he needed to delegate to someone else.

Doing all those things that needed to get done each day were making him feel unfulfilled, and overwhelmed, as if he wasn't following his true calling. He thought he needed to go do something else with his life.

After our session, he decided to hire a junior doctor, and some other people, and delegate many of his menial daily responsibilities. That way he could concentrate on his core competencies. Many entrepreneurs struggle with delegating tasks to other people, because they believe nobody can do the job right or as good as they can. After the phone session he saw matters much more clearly, and was able to reclaim his passion for what he was doing.

There is power in the following questions:

“What outcome do you want?”

“Why do you want it?”

Deep down we all really know what we’re meant to do – but we seldom explore it because it scares us, or we believe that it’s outside the realm of possibility.

The Pleasure Principle, and the reverse side of that – the Pain Principle is at the root of what motivates us as people. Sigmund Freud, picking up on an idea first put forward by Aristotle, explained that everything we do is either an attempt to avoid pain, or to gain pleasure.

When people associate a lot of pain with doing what they want in life, they will tend to avoid going after it at all costs. A phone client of mine just a few weeks ago took about half an hour before he could come up with something that he absolutely loved. Once the crack was opened up, though, it all started pouring out of him. By the end of the session, he had 15 things that he absolutely loved on the list.

When you’ve got a list, there are usually 5-15 things on it for the average person. The more your daily work and your lifestyle facilitates doing those things that you love – the happier you will be. Those loves could be anything.

It could be hobbies, interests that you have, magazines or websites you frequent, or books that you like reading, events you attend, or groups you’re a part of. Whatever naturally brings you enjoyment, and whatever you love spending your time on.

The more your life’s work and lifestyle enables you to do all those things on your list, the more fulfilled you will tend to feel.

If your lifestyle only lets you do one or two of perhaps ten things on the list, you’re going to feel as if something is missing, as if you’re

not living up to your full potential. If you're working at a job just for money, and don't believe in the product or service – you're not going to stick with it. When something better comes along, you'll automatically change.

“The Tao is unpredictable to those that live according to plans. Only those who have no agenda are in harmony with the Tao.”

~ Lao Tzu, Father of Taoism

When you're doing what you love, and believe in, you will suffer for it. This is especially true when it comes to your own business.

Any successful entrepreneur treats their business like a child.

A business is like a child in the sense that it takes your full attention, and most of your time. If you don't love that business, just like a child, it's going to have a life of its own, and it will misbehave. As soon as the first challenges come up, obstacles appear, and the difficulties start to come your way, you'll tend to give up. It takes an incredible amount of dedication to keep a business healthy, and make a success of it.

So, getting back to the story, I figured that a year or two down the line I would be right back where I had been, financially. I expected to make a healthy six-figure income in no time at all. I really believed that. Why shouldn't I?

I'd known nothing but success so far. My career trajectory had always been steadily upwards, and when I started the business with James and Paul, I was making \$160,000 a year. I had tried all kinds of things, like the fish tanks, and tending bar, development work, general contracting, real estate investing, general real estate, mortgages, etc., and I was certain this latest choice would work out just as well.

If you're considering becoming an entrepreneur, however, here's a useful rule of thumb: It's always going to take about five times the amount of money you might think, and it will probably take three or four times longer than you think.

If you have a particular line of business in mind, it's always a good idea to find somebody who is already doing it, and shadow them for a day or two. That way you get to see exactly what the job entails on a day-to-day basis, and you can decide if it really is what you imagined it would be. Before you decide to invest the time and money on going to college, make sure. The only reason to invest so much in college is if it really is a prerequisite for landing the job of your dreams. You shouldn't just go to college for the sake of going to college.

So there I was, considering all my options.

At this point in my life I was basically just flush with cash, I sold my house, and had \$120,000 in the bank. I was making a bit of money from the guys I was still employing, and paying my bills.

The most important obligation I had was to be able to continue paying the mortgage on the office building. If I lost that, I would lose half a million dollars in equity, and be unable to pay back the money I'd borrowed from a friend.

This was going to be my seed capital for starting my new business. As a worst-case scenario, if I couldn't make a success of it within a year or two, I wouldn't run out of money completely.

I liquidated everything that I could, in order to make cash available. I even liquidated my retirement annuity, while I was waiting for my house to be sold. I got hit with a ridiculous penalty of \$20,000, but it is what it is. I had enormous bills to pay in the meantime.

I wanted to keep my boat, though – because it's just such a great lifestyle. Other than that I simplified everything in my life, cutting down to bare basics.

Most importantly, for once in my life, I had lots of time on my hands.

Becoming a Life Coach

“To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life.”

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

In February 2006 I self-published my first book using a print-on-demand company called Lulu.com. Back then there weren't too many options for this kind of thing online. It was before Amazon's CreateSpace, Kindle, or the iBook store.

I set about the task of figuring out how to market my new book, and how to market myself as a Life Coach teaching self-reliance.

I was used to Television advertising, Infomercials, radio ads, direct mail, billboards, yellow page ads and bus bench ads. I had no experience with the kind of online marketing required for launching a book. The industry was still in its infancy, and people were still figuring out how to master sales on the Internet. Selling a \$20 book is something quite different from selling real estate, and I was about to discover just how difficult it could be.

I was very confident about the ideas, wisdom, skills, tips and techniques I had to share with other men about pickup, dating and relationships. If I asked just about any guy whether or not he understood women, I would get the same blank stare. I knew I could share knowledge that people could use to improve their lives. I believed that it was information that would be in high demand.

I was going through a major paradigm shift in my life, in terms of how I had always looked at relationships. With my English girlfriend, I was in the best relationship I'd ever been in. Before that I had been

in another great relationship with what I considered the ultimate woman. For once in my life, I could say that I honestly understood the relationship game. Plus, I had been helping friends and family for years with what I knew and afterward, they got the same results as I did.

Instead of walking around with my girlfriend, and secretly looking at other women, thinking about what might have been, that the grass was greener on the other side, I was with the woman of my dreams.

At this point in my life, at age 35, after having learned the things I had, I was finally able to date the caliber of woman that I had always wanted. Dating my ultimate dream woman had always been a fantasy for me. It never went past the second date. To be able to take it beyond the fantasy, and experience being in love, and all the wonderful things that go along with it, in reality, was a big, positive change in my life. It was a massive paradigm shift and boost to my quality of life.

It was more than dumb luck, because I knew how to repeat the process again. The woman I was with, in my mind at least, was the hottest woman in the world. I wanted to show people how to make the changes they needed to in order to experience that for themselves.

What had always kept me from having these kinds of relationships was really all in my head. It was all just the story that I was telling myself inwardly. Until you experience something in real life, it remains little more than a mental concept. It's theory, nothing more.

After all the shit I went through with real estate and my business partners, I thought this was the way to make a difference in the world.

As you become more successful in life, you're able to live in the kind of house you want, drive the kind of cars you want, and be able to travel the world and stay at the places you want. As you hang out with the wealthy, successful people you want, and date the kinds of

women you want – in short, living the life you’ve always dreamed of – it’s exciting and awesome, but it doesn’t make you perpetually happy and fulfill you completely. The human need to contribute to others needs to be fulfilled too.

“Do not look for your Master, BE the Master for whom you have been looking.”

~ Neale Donald Walsch

When you focus on doing things for other people, you fulfill your other five human needs.

That’s why you will often see the wealthiest people in the world come to this realization at some point in their life. It’s giving something back that brings them fulfillment.

This is the reason why Andrew Carnegie pretty much gave away all his money to build libraries, as a way to give back, and make the world a better place for future generations. Think of Bill Gates and Warren Buffet with their giving pledge.

Money doesn’t make you happy, but it does give you choices. It gives you options. It sure is nice to arrive at your problems in style. Money gives you the opportunity to experience the kind of lifestyle that you want.

From age 31 to 36 I really felt like I had made it on every level, personally and professionally. The relationship success was the last piece of the puzzle. I no longer felt like I was missing out on anything in life. There were no more thoughts about other guys with attractive girlfriends, thinking – “that’s not fair, how does a guy like that get that kind of girl.”

Human beings are growth-oriented. We always want to expand, and grow beyond our current limitations and boundaries. It’s our fifth

human need. For me, the next step on my journey was about helping other people, and growing further as an individual.

When I compared my own happiness and good fortune to what was happening in other parts of the world, it made me want to do something more to contribute.

I'd been studying world events, history, and war since I was a kid. One of my favorite books as a kid was *Great American Fighter Pilots of World War II*. I don't know how many times I read that book – I knew all the Ace fighter pilots from the war by heart. Both my grandfathers, and even my great grandfathers were in the military, and my dad and uncle too. I grew up with war stories. Even further back in my lineage, it seems my family had always been in the wars.

That sensation I experienced in Malta, where I felt a calling to become president, or do something meaningful in a guiding and leading capacity came from this place in my life. I was fulfilled, so the next logical step was to help other people.

A lot of the astronauts who did the moon landings suffered from feelings of disillusionment and meaninglessness, simply because – how do you top walking on the moon? What's the next step up from there? Some of those guys actually struggled with alcoholism, and other problems when they returned from the missions, and had nothing higher to aim for.

Every human being has got to have an emotionally compelling reason to get up and do what they're doing every day.

My peer group in 'Tony World' inspired me to grow as a person, and to share the knowledge, the wisdom, and the experience with other people. When you're traveling around the world, associating with these kinds of people, talking about these things constantly, it's natural to want to make some kind of an impact on the world that makes it a little better than how you found it. I wanted to share what I

had learned personally, especially where it came to pickup, dating and relationships.

The spiritual things I'd always been interested in, like Edgar Cayce, Eckhart Tolle, Neale Donald Walsch, Dr. Wayne Dyer, Panache Desai, and studying different world religions – these things all led me along this pathway. They were things that other people might not have been too interested in, but they had always been a part of my life. I was always looking for answers to these kinds of questions.

When you connect enough of the dots, and you've found enough pieces of the puzzle, you're able to look at the world in a way that makes sense. This is especially true if you are open to include the spiritual dimension.

Contemplating the possibility of reincarnation, for example, is a way of looking at things that can provide answers. Sometimes more traditional views on metaphysics might not be able to explain these events as well.

Edgar Cayce talked about it in many of his readings. It's a way that the soul progresses through lifetimes, exploring many different destinies. In one lifetime someone might have been a tyrant, or even a mass murder. In later lifetimes they have to suffer as a result, subject to the laws of karma and the wheel of life.

Seeking Meaning in the Bigger Picture

The story of Jim Larson, and his wife Carla, demonstrates how these ideas can help a person make sense of some of the things that happen to people in life.

Jim Larson was the brother of Sonja Larson, the woman who was murdered in Gainesville with her roommate. It was a terrible enough event all by itself, but Jim's nightmare wasn't over after the murder of his sister. He had just gotten to the point where life made sense to him again, with the support and love of his wife, when tragedy struck one more time.

Carla, his wife, worked with me at Centex Rooney back when I was employed there in the summer of 1996, before I left to start my real estate business. She was one of the kindest nicest human beings I ever met. She would do anything to help anyone. Everybody loved her! One afternoon she went to Publix to pick up subs for all the girls for lunch, but she never returned.

I remember hearing that she had disappeared, and reading about it in the paper. During the next two days, police and friends searched for Carla and her missing white Ford Explorer while Jim walked around in a daze. Was this really happening to him all over again?

John Huggins, a landscaper who had been in and out of jail all his life, was on vacation with his wife and their five children. They were staying in a motel across the street from the supermarket. In broad daylight, in a busy parking lot, he walked up to Carla Larson, punched her in the stomach and kidnapped her, driving away in her car. Then he drove to a remote field, raped her, and strangled her to death.

On June 12 two of Carla's co-workers, including Gary Wilson, a superintendent there, saw a car matching her cars description driving recklessly, and cut right in front of them. They thought nothing more

about it, until they heard the news. They went back to the area where they had seen the car, and stumbled upon her nude body, face down in the sand, while searching a field near the Publix.

Carla had been wrapped in a beach towel and partially buried. Investigators identified her body, which had decomposed in the summer heat, from dental records.

Jim Larson was already beyond grief over the murder of his sister, and when this happened, he basically just went numb. The police actually made him carry out a polygraph test, because they were surprised at his cold reaction to his wife's murder. How could this double tragedy befall one man? What had he done to deserve it?

For most people there is no way to make sense of it.

Each of us has to figure out the big questions of life in our own way, but for me, looking at it from a spiritual perspective, it was part of his soul's path. These things had to happen to him.

I believe everything happens for a reason in life. There are no accidents or coincidences. If our souls are eternal, and we incarnate with other groups of souls like Edgar Cayce stated in his readings, then maybe from a soul perspective, Carla and Sonja came into this world to willingly lay their lives down for their families, friends and communities for a lesson of love and loss? What can losing two people so close to a person teach them about life, love and loss? Can it teach a soul to appreciate life more? Can it teach one to love more, or be more compassionate?

I believe we choose our parents. Without my experiences in childhood, I would have never had the pain, emotional wounds and trauma that drove me to become a lifelong seeker of wisdom, truth and knowledge.

It was a strange time in my life. In a sense I felt like I had already checked off the major goals in my life, and like those astronauts

returning from their missions, the odd sensation of meaninglessness and loss of direction threatened to swamp me. I was struggling to find the internal enthusiasm to do anything except write my book.

In May 2006 my house was sold, and I moved in with my dad for a few months to decide on my next move. My girlfriend, was studying to become a Chiropractor, and visited when she could. She was back and forth between countries at the time. I was also simplifying my life, and living like a broke college student. I had sold most of what I could, and cut down my monthly expenses right down to the bone. I decided that I would suffer for a year or two until my book became successful.

I really didn't know how long it would take to make a success of my new career path. I was simply trying to make my money stretch as far as possible.

Meantime I was setting up a website, and learning about online marketing.

I had used a ghostwriter to help me finish the book, and now it was time to publish it. I created a rudimentary website. The Internet was in the fledgling stage of development, and I was breaking new ground, so there was a lot to learn. At first I spent more money on advertising than my book was actually making.

I was confident, and believed that my book was worthwhile. The wisdom, the information in it was what had changed my life, and I firmly believed it would go viral, and quickly become a best-seller.

The psychology of self-help, when it comes to relationships, and men, can become quite interesting.

Guys are naturally hesitant to ask for help, especially when it comes to the sensitive subject of relationships. There's a reason why men have trouble asking for directions when they get lost. (In the days before GPS and Google Maps it was more of a problem, perhaps).

It's embarrassing to admit that you're not the master of your situation, and the master of yourself. If you can't navigate to where you need to go, it makes you feel like you're a failure in the eyes of your woman.

When I read books like that, I used to hide them, because I didn't want people to know I needed to educate myself about being more successful with women, so I can fully understand where most guys are coming from. It's a tricky subject.

I investigated ways to overcome the challenge, and find a route to market that would open the doors. I started looking into sales copywriters to help me.

Writers like Gary Halbert, were reputed to be the masters of the craft, back in those days. I contacted him, and for a fee of \$15,000, plus 3% commission on sales he agreed to help. My thinking was that I would hire him to write the sales copy, and my headaches would be over.

We had a few conversations, and a month later he wrote the sales letter. On his advice I advertised in Penthouse and Men's Fitness magazines. It takes about 90 days to make it into a publication, so what came next was a waiting game.

It was a welcome change not having to go to the office every day. I could wear shorts and T-shirts, and do what I wanted. At the same time, it was disconcerting. What was I going to do with all this free time? My boat was stored nearby, and I would go out on that with friends and family from time to time.

A Role Model for Living a Peaceful Life

I spent a lot of time talking to Bob, a good friend of mine who lives on South Beach. He is basically retired, and writes piano music, when he feels inspired, travels when he wants to and basically lives life on his own terms.

We discussed the nature of the universe, and life, and our spiritual ideas, business, and the future. He made all his money selling his shares in AOL and trading stocks since then. He told me once that his goal when he was young was to get to a place in life where he had enough time to think.

To me success means having the freedom to live your life the way you want to.

“The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs or impede their efforts to obtain it.”

~ John Stuart Mill

A lot of the elements in my life are modeled after Bob’s lifestyle – it’s the way I see my perfect life. It’s one of the reasons I choose to stay on the beach, and these ideas, and this energy find their way into my articles, videos, books, and my teaching / coaching style.

My YouTube channel, and my articles are all infused with this energy, and this vibe. There’s a picture of the ocean, and a Tiki hut. It’s what I want to put out into the world. Everything in my life is now designed to facilitate this peaceful and relaxed state of mind.

Even as I’m sitting down to write and record the material for this book, I am sitting looking out at the ocean. It’s as flat as glass, with a few clouds in the sky – and it’s absolutely beautiful. I’m filled with gratitude that I can sit here and watch the boats go by, and all the

people on the beach, while engaged in something meaningful that will ultimately make the world a little better.

The sense of joy and fulfillment I get from being here, and helping people is priceless. The success stories from previous clients and fans all contribute to this feeling.

At the back of my books and on my website there's a quote by Thomas Jefferson:

"Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day."

~ Thomas Jefferson

That's why I talk about the things I do. They are subjects that I understand and that I know about. I talk about things that will make the world a better place. They work in my own life.

The biggest thing I learned from Bob was setting myself up to have the time to think, and to do what I want.

I write articles and books, and record videos because it's what I want to do. I work when I want to, sleep when I want to, fuck when I want to, eat when I want to, and travel when I want to. I spend my time with the people I want to, and make my own schedule. I give the same freedom to the people that I work with, because I think everyone deserves the same freedom. I want people to enjoy the same quality of living that I do. I know not everyone wants to do that, but the more people in the world who are living the way they actually want to, the more they will be subconsciously giving everyone else the permission to live that way.

"Is freedom anything else than the right to live as we wish? Nothing else." ~ Epictetus

Bob made all his money at AOL when he sold his shares, as I explained before. His advice about choosing where and how to work has always made sense to me. He always said:

“When you go work for a company somewhere, don’t just work anywhere. Choose a company that you believe in, choose a startup with a vision or product you believe in. Choose a company where you can get stock options, and that has every intention of going public. Get as many shares as you can, so when they go public, you can cash out. And, of course, have the right exit strategy.

When the Time Warner AOL merger was announced, it was the largest corporate merger in history. His stock agreements allowed him to sell the stocks in case of a merger. That’s exactly what he did. He saw that staying with the company, and consequently buying into the egotistical business strategy was not going to be a good move. Many of his colleagues who stayed all ended up losing their money.

A lot of people lose money on investments, or on the stock market because they’re emotionally involved with the decision they’ve made. They’re emotionally attached to a trade, instead of being dispassionate. When they lose money, they panic, and look for a quick way to recoup their losses, and often lose even more, by taking unnecessary risks.

It’s like in aviation, when an aircraft goes into a flat spin. It’s a stall, and there’s no way to recover.

A friend of mine rode the cycle of bad investments all the way to the bottom a few short years ago. He lost all of his money. He was becoming cocky, and taking risks with trading. At first he made money, but after one bad investment, he lost his head, and tried desperately to recover. When the next trade didn’t work out, he panicked, and invested in more risky trades. He worked himself into an emotional frenzy, and lost it all. In his mid-forties he lost half a million dollars in stock.

When you're busy earning a living, running a business, or working on your career – there's always something to do. There's never time to think.

I was very grateful that my circumstances allowed me plenty of time to do just that.

“Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power.”

~ Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Roman philosopher

Time to Learn

“Money is coined liberty.”

~ *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*

For probably the first time in my life, I had enough free time to enjoy life, listen to music, and to just sit and think.

I was reading a lot, about all kinds of subjects that interested me, including UFO's, the world economy, the banking system, the government, history, and the military blogs (milblogs), including news from the war in the Middle East.

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”

~ *Benjamin Franklin*

I was particularly interested in the conflict, and America's role in world events. The war reporter, Michael Yon published a lot of information about the troops on the ground that wasn't covered by the regular television news channels and mainstream media. It gave me a completely different perspective on the whole situation.

Michael Yon is a retired Green Beret, and originally comes from Winter Haven, Florida. He has been reporting from Iraq and Afghanistan since December 2004.

Among other things, he talks about the good work done by US troops and personnel on the ground, and offers insights into the conflict that you can't get from watching the news channels and media. For example, talking about the 'Anbar Awakening' and how this was the turning point in the insurgency in Iraq, he reported this on his website:

“I saw this dramatic transformation as a Marine officer deployed to Haditha in 2006 and Karma in 2007-2008. The Anbar Awakening was not a spontaneous uprising against the horrible brutality of the insurgents. Rather, it occurred and succeeded due to the conditions created by U.S. forces who steadily built the foundation for Anbar's stability.

Through dynamic security operations, complex relationships with tribal leaders, and consistent moral authority, we successfully separated the population from the insurgency, demonstrated our potential for victory, and earned the support of Iraqis yearning for peace. It was only after we established these conditions that the Sunni sheiks could urge their tribes to awaken and stand together with U.S. forces against the AQI terrorists.”

(Yon, 2009)

What I was reading was information that didn't make it to the evening news. It was a whole other side of the story. At this point in my life, my mind was opening in new ways, and my horizons were broadened.

Besides following world events, I learned a lot about the history of money, the financial system, the economy, and how your mindset influences your financial status in life. It's a very important subject, in my opinion, and I feel that it's important for people to know what's really going on.

What Money Really Means

Most people don't understand money. Way too many regular people think that some people are rich simply because they screwed someone over, and ripped them off. Money is just something to spend.

The truth of it is that money is something else entirely. Money is a *public utility*, and there are two fundamental reasons that money exists at all:

First of all, it's a medium for financial exchange. It makes commerce easier, which means buying and selling. Otherwise you would have to barter for everything. If you wanted to buy tires, you would have to trade something that you had – like a bunch of baloney sandwiches. That's a practical problem which money solves, and it's fairly straight forward.

Money exists in different forms. There is digital money (the latest major development being bitcoin, ethereum, litecoin, etc.), paper money, and coins, which are all just basically tokens of value. In the past we used the gold standard to stabilize the relative value of money, but that ended in the 1970's when the dollar became a fiat currency. The value of fiat currency is backed by the government that issued it, not physical gold. The U.S. dollar is fiat money, as are the euro and many other major world currencies. Commodity money, on the other hand, is underpinned by some physical good such as gold or silver. Those days are gone in world finance.

The second purpose for money is that it's a store for value. You literally translate your gifts, skills, your time, talents and your assets into paper or digital receipts. This is money. What's useful about it is that you get to accumulate it, and use it for what you need. If you accumulate enough, you can retire when you're older, and not need to work.

There's a great video by Bill Still called the Secret of Oz. It's a 2 hour documentary about the history of money, creation of debt, banking and how the monetary system works. It is one of the best documentaries on the subject that I've seen – banking is basically the biggest con trick ever perpetrated on mankind. I regard it as essential viewing for those who wish to know and understand our financial world today.

According to Still, when the U.S. economy (or any economy, for that matter) is in a deflationary spiral, nothing can stop it except monetary reform. What does that mean, exactly? The answers coming out of this 2-hour film can be summarized as follows:

- It means we need to end national debt. Nations should not be allowed to borrow money, or keep perpetuating the current systems. If they want to spend, they have to take the political heat right away by taxing.
- Fractional Reserve lending needs to be changed. Banks can only lend money they actually have.
- Gold money is not necessarily the answer. Historically gold always works against a thriving middle class.
- The total quantity of money and credit in a national system must be fixed.

The history of money is a fascinating subject on its own. Back in the Middle Ages they used what were called tally sticks over in England. The reigning government would cut ridges into maple wood, which never splits the same way. The bank kept one half of the stick, and the person who borrowed money would keep the other half. When the debt was paid off, the two parts were put together again.

“[It was] the poverty caused by the bad influence of the English bankers on the Parliament which has caused in the colonies hatred of the English and... the Revolutionary War... The inability of the Colonists to get the power to issue their own money permanently out

*of the hands of George III and the international bankers was the
PRIME REASON for the Revolutionary War.”*

~ Benjamin Franklin

When you ask the man in the street how money works, they might suggest that it's a system of tokens that circulate forever. That system is called full reserve banking. Unfortunately the reality is that money simply doesn't work like that, and that's because of Fractional Reserve Banking.

Only around 3% of our total money supply is made up of tokens that circulate forever, either paper money, or otherwise. The vast majority is made up of a completely different kind of temporary money, continuously being created and destroyed. It gets created when banks make loans and it is destroyed when those loans are repaid.

“Banks lend by creating credit. They create the means of payment out of nothing.”

~ Sir Ralph George Hawtrey, British Monetary Economist

People think of banks as money warehouses, and if you take a loan from the bank, you're basically borrowing someone else's money, or money that actually exists. Not true. When you take out a loan, most of that money is created out of thin air, and lent to you with interest.

You can think of the national economy as a swimming pool, with water streaming in from a tap at the top, and out again through a drain. When new money is created, in other words, when someone borrows money to buy a house, it's like turning on the tap, letting more water in. There's a certain amount of water in the pool, which is supposed to stay relatively stable, but each time a loan is repaid, it's like water running out of the drainage hole.

It all works, in theory at least, until there's a huge change in the number of people taking out loans. If a small percentage of borrowers

default, and can't pay back their loans, the system can absorb the shock. If too many people run into trouble, the system fails.

The Federal Reserve Bank lends money to all the various banks, and the whole system is precariously balanced to keep on ticking over, until the wheels come off with a financial crisis like the one in 2007.

If you default on a loan, the bank has to eat the loss. Usually there is mortgage insurance to cover that, but still, foreclosing on a property isn't good business for banks.

Let's say you bought a house for \$100,000, and put down a \$10,000 down payment. If you default, and stop paying, the bank has to foreclose. The bank has to pay real estate commissions, attorney costs, closing costs, court costs and possibly repairs to the property. They only get back maybe \$60,000, which means \$0.60 on the dollar. The rest is a loss for the bank. When nothing is selling, and so many people are defaulting, banks have a real problem. That's why during the crisis of 2007 the banks had to find ways to minimize those losses. They decided that it was better to have people stay in their homes, even though they couldn't afford to repay their mortgages. They figured that the actual owners would take better care of the property than leaving them vacant. It was unprecedented, and a little bit insane.

I saw neighborhoods with two hundred homes, and maybe only a dozen families living there. The banks staggered their foreclosures over a couple of years, and slowly turned off the taps, reducing the amount of cash flow into the giant swimming pool of the US economy.

Meantime huge sums of money were continually flowing out of the 'pool.'

If you've got people coming over, and taking water out of the pool, you need to keep topping it up, or it will run dry. Take, for example, people coming over from South America, Mexico, etc., and working

in the US, either legally, or illegally. They may have no intention of becoming a US citizen, but instead are sending most of their money back home to their families, who need it. Money is leaving the US ‘pool’ – it’s constantly draining out.

When more money is leaving the pool than money returning, it’s called a trade deficit.

Investopedia reports, for example, that “the U.S. Census Bureau data shows that for the first 11 months in 2016, U.S. imports from Mexico stood at \$270.6 billion. Even though imports are down, they still exceed exports, leaving a trade deficit to the tune of \$58.79 billion.”

(Mrinalini Krishna, Investopedia, 2017)

The US trade deficit with China is even higher. The US Census Bureau reported a \$367 billion deficit in 2016.

(US Census Bureau, 2017)

That money is constantly leaving the ‘pool,’ and not returning. We’re importing the goods, the trinkets, and the manufactured items, but the money is flowing out, draining the economy. Those foreign workers are not paying US taxes, and they’re not contributing to the local economy. It’s like taking a giant bucket and scooping funds out of the pool.

When you run into a situation like we did in 2007, it spells disaster. The financial crisis at the time resulted in \$3 Trillion that got sucked out of the pool.

The first dominoes to fall were the people living paycheck to paycheck.

Barack Obama had to take drastic steps during his first term in office with the so-called bailout strategy. It was necessary to rapidly add more funds into the economy to prevent a backslide into a great depression. The Chicago Tribune reported on the situation:

“Even before taking office in January 2009, Obama had signed on to the previous Bush administration's drastic, but politically unpopular, plan to directly infuse up to \$700 billion in taxpayer-backed loans into the U.S. banking industry.

Without providing that liquidity, working capital and credit lines to healthy businesses, big and small, would have dried up. That would have translated into no money for producing products, making payroll, hiring vendors, keeping the lights on and nearly anything else you can think of as essential to operating a company and the economy.”

(Reed, 2017)

Back in 1913 the idea of a Federal Reserve System was sold to the American public. The idea was to separate banking from politics, to prevent corruption, and to prevent the inevitable boom-bust cycles. If you look at the history, it didn't actually work. We've been in those boom bust cycles all along – with the 1929 stock market crash, and Black Friday in 1987, and then the latest crisis. It takes at least a decade to stabilize the economy after a bust cycle.

“I am a most unhappy man. I have unwittingly ruined my country. A great industrial nation is now run by its system of credit. We are no longer a government by free opinion, no longer a government by conviction and the vote of the majority, but a government by the opinion and duress of a small group of dominant men.”

~ Woodrow Wilson

President Trump has vowed to address the problem by lowering the tax rate for corporations to 15-20%. The end goal is getting money pumped back into the US economy from the foreign companies that have been draining the pool. The targets are companies that have moved their money and operations overseas, and who have laid off their US employees. The more money that is in circulation, the more becomes available to fuel a healthy growth in the economy. The net

effect of money circulating in the Economy is the only important thing, at the end of the day.

We're only just starting to see the economy stabilize.

"My motto is: 'Never give up.' I follow this very strictly. I do not let problems and challenges stop me; they are normal."

~ U.S. President, Donald J. Trump

Bankers love to discuss the economy in language that is confusing to the average person. They talk about "inflation" and "tapering," and most people don't get it. What are they hiding? It's important that people understand what's going on, to prevent these kinds of things happening again.

The Federal Reserve's "tapering" program involved a large-scale bond-buying program, supposedly aimed at alleviating the struggling economic conditions. It included changes to the discount rate and the reserve requirements.

Basically what happens is that the US treasury creates a government bond. That bond is a promise to repay a certain amount of money. They give it to the Federal Reserve, where it is kept on record, and the government goes out and 'spends' that money into existence. The Fed issues the money, and the government spends it on Social Security, or welfare, or a stimulus package for roads or infrastructure – whatever is needed at the time.

"The modern banking system manufactures 'money' out of nothing; The process is, perhaps, the most astounding piece of 'sleight of hand' that was ever invented."

~ Major L. L. B. Angas

The bottom line is that the Federal Reserve creates the money out of thin air, and then it can sell those bonds to China, or Japan, or other countries. Interest becomes payable on that, which the government has to then pay. In the end it becomes a burden on taxpayers.

The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) is comprised of the Board of Governors and five reserve-bank presidents, and it meets eight times throughout the year to set key interest rates and to determine whether to increase or decrease the money supply within the economy.

When the Federal Reserve buys back those government bonds, the government doesn't need to pay interest. When it sells them off, the government has to pay interest again.

In theory, the revenue from income tax should be enough to cover the interest payments on those debts.

Ellen Brown wrote a brilliant book called the *Web of Debt*, in which she investigates how all of this works. She is an attorney, president of the Public Banking Institute and author of 12 books. She pointed out an interesting case in in the US, showing a way to reform the system.

Since the early 1900's a public bank in North Dakota has been in existence. Instead of the state taking all the money and putting it into Citi Bank, Bank of America or HSBC, they put it into this public bank. Like any other bank, they can create low interest loans to pay for everything the state needs.

"I am afraid the ordinary citizen will not like to be told that the banks can and do create money. And they who control the credit of the nation direct the policy of Governments and hold in the hollow of their hand the destiny of the people."

~ Reginald McKenna

What's interesting about it, though, is that even during the financial crisis, the unemployment rate stayed relatively steady in that area. What Ellen Brown is doing is working to get other states to copy this model, in order to stabilize the circulation of money in each state. The idea is to make the system less reliant on the Federal Reserve System. If you look back at the last 100 years of that system, you will agree that it isn't without its risks. She shared this comment on her blog:

“The main flaw in the current model is that private profiteers have acquired control of the credit spigots. They can cut off the flow, direct it to their cronies, and manipulate it for personal gain at the expense of the producing economy.

The benefits of bank credit can be maintained while eliminating these flaws, through a system of banks operated as public utilities, serving the public interest and returning their profits to the public.”

(Brown, 2017)

Allan Greenspan, who served as Chairman of the Federal Reserve of the United States from 1987 to 2006, admitted that the regulators did not realize how much sub-prime money was in circulation. Of course, ignorance is a very poor excuse. The fact is that we have allowed private agencies to control the destiny of the economy, with no proper checks and balances in place.

“The One-World government leaders and their ever close bankers have now acquired full control of the money and credit machinery of the U.S. via the creation of the privately owned Federal Reserve bank.”

~ Curtis Dall

A lot of money that was created out of thin air was chasing after the limited resource – property. The supply of property was lower than the demand, at the time. It was an artificial inflation in the value of property.

When I was in the real estate business, 95% of what we lent out was in the form of ‘non-conforming’ loans. It was close to half a billion dollars of debt.

The dollar has lost 90-95% of its value since the Fed was created in 1913. The excessive printing of paper and digital money leads to problems when the currency loses its value and purchasing power too fast. At the end of the day money is only worth something because we as human beings have a perception of its relative value.

The perceived value of a country’s currency depends on a lot of things.

Take for example the value of German money after the First World War. The Weimar Republic was the name given to Germany and its political system between late 1918 (the end of World War I) and 1933 (the rise of Nazism). The rest of the world blamed them for starting the war, and demanded that the nation pay up its debt. The Republic printed vast amounts of money, but the Allies refused to accept the paper money, which was quickly becoming worthless, and demanded gold instead. Eventually the Germans ran out of gold, and suffered financially until the start of the next war. In fact, the economic stress was a big part of the reason for that war.

The same thing happened in Venezuela over a decade ago. When Hugo Chavez came to power, he instituted huge social and economic changes. His radical government confiscated the property of huge oil corporations in sweeping Socialist reforms. He quickly spent most of the money made from the country’s rich oil deposits, and eventually he also printed large amounts of money.

In order to maintain the perception of value in a currency, you need to have stable property rights, and the government needs to be stable, and the economy has to be stable. It has to be a safe place to live, and to invest. You need to have peace of mind that the government won't come and seize your business, your assets or your home.

Venezuela broke that trust, and so foreign companies were wary of investing there. The government seized companies, the entire oil infrastructure, and took over the control of farms and producers and only paid the owners pennies on the dollar of their actual assets value. As a result, there were no longer any stable property rights. What incentive could Venezuela offer to any country's businessmen to come and spend their money on Venezuelan soil, if there were no guarantee they would own that property tomorrow? Foreign corporations no longer wanted to spend their money into the Venezuelan economy.

To make matters worse, as a reaction to Chavez's actions, foreign banks no longer accepted Venezuelan currency. The country was no longer stable, there were no longer any stable property rights, and the currency became worthless. As a result the country is financially crippled today.

The same thing happened in Russia, with the Russian sanctions over the past several years, and again in Iran, with their sanctions. When other banking systems, and other countries won't accept your currency, the value of your currency drops. Buying goods, food, oil, and all the things necessary to run the economy becomes extremely expensive.

The US dollar is the world's 'reserve' currency. The same rules apply to the dollar that applies to any other country. Property rights and the government must remain stable, and the currency has to be perceived as valuable.

We're still the safest, most free and stable country in the history of the world. The likelihood of war or instability is relatively low in the US. We still have the strongest military force in the world. Those all count towards creating the right perception in people's minds – and hence the value of the dollar.

As the world population continues to grow, we have to maintain stable property rights, a stable government, and we have to regulate the printing of money in order to maintain the perception of the dollar as a stable currency. Once the perception of security dissolves, money loses value. Remember, money is a store of value. As inflation escalates due to excessive and unbalanced new money creation, that value dissipates – it is gradually eroded away.

It's very important for the average person to understand how money works, and how it circulates. There's a lot of misinformation in the media, and people say a lot of things about the economy that make absolutely no fucking sense at all to the average person. People talk about the Federal government borrowing or printing money, and people say that we are headed for another Weimar Republic.

So if you're worried about the security of the dollar, there are other options available to you. The dollar is only one currency, and it's not the only store of value on the planet.

The Russian Ruble, the English Pound, the Euro, the Chinese Renminbi, the Japanese Yen – these are all viable options, and there are many other currencies to choose from. Besides that there are also a host of digital currencies – called cryptocurrencies.

Bitcoin is currently the largest blockchain network, followed by Ethereum, Ripple and Litecoin (as at the time of writing). Precious metals such as gold and silver also store value, as do antiques, classic cars, art, real estate and so on. The dollar is not the only place to store your value. You have options.

Investing your personal wealth, and diversifying your security is a wise strategy to safeguard your financial independence. The idea is always to buy low and sell high. Buy gold when the currency value is very stable. During periods when the government prints lots of money, the value of printed and digital money slumps, while precious metals increase in value. It's fascinating how it all hangs together. Silver, for example was trading at the \$50 an ounce mark, and it has dropped right down again. The price follows the waves of the boom / bust money cycle. If you can buy when the price is low, and sell when it's high, and repeat the process, you can not only avoid losing money during a financial downturn, but also make a significant profit.

The same thing happens in the real estate market. There's a saying that goes: You should buy property when there's 'blood in the streets' – in other words when things become unstable, the value drops, and it's a good time to buy because everyone is trying to sell. Eventually prices go back up when everything settles. When I got into real estate, there were plenty of properties for sale that were really cheap – and this was because the market had been unstable before – with the previous S&L crisis. I was lucky enough to get into it at the perfect time.

When you understand the swings of the economic boom / bust cycle, you are able to plan accordingly, instead of relying on dumb luck.

To go back again to the analogy of water in the pool, to illustrate the effects of the money supply rising and falling: Economically speaking, a rising tide lifts all boats. Conversely, when the level drops, everything is affected.

The current economic situation in Europe also illustrates the effects of the money supply on a wider scale. Centralizing and concentrating all of the banking power has had some catastrophic knock-on effects over all of Europe. Nations such as Greece and Italy, who weren't all that financially strong before the change, are suffering under the

strain of the Euro, and since they dissolved their individual national currencies, there is nothing to fall back on. The Greek people in particular, are getting the worst of it, since letting go of the Drachma.

The British were smart enough to dodge the Euro bullet, and hanging onto the British pound has worked out relatively well for that nation. The rest of Europe gave up their individual currencies. The very definition of a sovereign nation state is having its own money / currency. The different governments, like the Greek government, borrowed far too much money to pay back in the long term. The general population is now getting fleeced as the utility companies, trains, bus lines, government buildings, etc., are sold for pennies on the dollar, and has been for the last decade. The number of people earning enough to take out loans is declining. The government reduces pensions and spending and increases taxes. When new money creation / bank lending decreases, government spending decreases and taxes increase, this reduces the money supply in circulation causing the economy to contract. It's an extremely complex problem, and the root of it is the banking system.

A lot of these people have come to the US because they simply can't make a living at home. That's the downside of concentrating and centralizing all the money. It was a decision that was made on an international level, and amidst a lot of warning from financial experts. Unfortunately the general population has no idea what implications are involved in the huge and confusing monetary system. Many are still calling for the Euro to be abolished. If it were possible for individual European countries to go back to using their original currencies, it would alleviate some of the problems, and provide more economic stability. Until people are educated about the financial system, most regular people are going to continue to suffer.

The same thing happens over and over again in different parts of the world.

In Zimbabwe, the tyrant Robert Mugabe started taking farms away from the farmers who were basically carrying the economy on their backs. At one point Zimbabwe was called the food cupboard of Africa, because they produced so much. Rich tobacco and cattle farms were the envy of other African nations. When Mugabe's regime forced the farmers off their lands at gunpoint, and gave the land to his cronies, and then printed huge amounts of paper money, the economy tanked.

Eventually it cost more to print the notes than what the notes were actually worth. The peak of hyperinflation occurred in mid-November 2008 with a rate estimated at 79,600,000,000% per month. Meanwhile the poorest of the poor found it impossible to buy food, and hordes of people streamed out of the country, desperately trying to make a living in neighboring countries, such as South Africa. As a result, foreign countries didn't want to invest in Zimbabwe. Just like Venezuela, Zimbabwe did not have a stable government; property rights and their currency value plummeted as a result.

Universal Basic Income

Lately a lot of people have been talking about an idea called the Universal Basic Income. Some believe it's necessary for the future of money in our society, while others believe it's a huge waste of time. I've included a discussion on the idea here because I want to add my two-cents-worth, and give you, the reader, the chance to consider the idea, and make up your own mind.

First let's define what it means. *The Guardian* explains it this way: "The idea is exactly as it sounds: the government would give every citizen – working or not – a fixed sum of money every week or month, with no strings attached. As time goes on, universal basic income (UBI) has gradually been transitioning from the radical left into the mainstream." (Ellie Mae O'Hagan, 2017)

Basically, if the banks are creating money out of thin air, for either private loans, or for the government to spend into existence, why not create basic stability for people, across the board, using UBI? The money is already being created out of thin air as loans lent at interest so the banks can make a profit. Why not replace welfare and government benefits with a UBI so the money supply, and as a result, the economy, are more stable and less prone to the boom / bust cycle?

Three or four governments have started exploring whether or not it's a viable solution. The idea is that if people have a secure, solid financial base, which takes care of the basic needs of life, it frees them up psychologically to be far more productive. Instead of struggling to put food on the table, people can contribute to the world in unique ways.

The old saying goes: "Give a man a fish, and he can eat for a day, teach him how to fish, and he can feed himself for a lifetime."

Marxist, Socialist, Communist and Left Wing thinkers are often demonizing the rich, and they love to blame the rich for all of society's woes. The problem is that if you take away people's money, and concentrate it into an ever-decreasing circle of power-possessing individuals, you end up with a failed State. You end up with the problems we talked about in Venezuela, for example. A Control freak like Chavez tried to manage the entire economy, without success. It is doomed to fail if your solution is to always just increase the taxes on rich people. That's like trying to get an alcoholic to drink himself sober. It's not going to work.

Handing out money to poor people isn't the solution either.

"By virtue of exchange, one man's prosperity is beneficial to all others."

~ Frederic Bastiat, French author & economist

The basic problem is that people don't understand money – and that leads them to manage their personal finances badly. You can give handouts to people, but if you aren't simultaneously teaching them to become self-reliant, you're basically just making the problem worse by making them dependent on lying incompetent politicians promising them handouts. People will simply spend that money on the basic necessities of life, or on whatever the hell they want to, and end up back where they started. A sustainable solution requires education.

That's part of the reason that this book exists. The more people who understand the relationships between money, value and time, the healthier the economy will become. Money isn't just something you spend, it's a store of value, and a public utility that makes a modern economy possible. It comes down to figuring out what's most important, and figuring out how to focus on the right things in life. Successful entrepreneur and well-known financial teacher, Jim Rohn said:

*“We get paid for bringing value to the marketplace. It takes time...
but we get paid for the value, not the time.”*

The more human beings are adding value to the economy, and to everyone’s lives, the better. People will become less susceptible to the bullshit spouted by people who are going about things in the wrong way.

Even if you confiscated all the money belonging to the wealthy in America, it wouldn’t be enough to solve any significant economic problems in the long term.

Bill Whittle is an American conservative blogger, political commentator, director, screenwriter, editor, pilot, and author. He created a really interesting YouTube video called “Eat the Rich” in which he looks at some of the facts about taxing the wealthy.

“This year, Congress will spend \$3.7 trillion dollars. That’s about \$10 billion per day. Can we prey upon the rich to cough up the money? According to IRS statistics, roughly 2 percent of U.S. households have an income of \$250,000 and above. By the way, \$250,000 per year hardly qualifies one as being rich. If Congress imposed a 100 percent tax, taking all earnings above \$250,000 per year, it would yield the princely sum of \$1.4 trillion. That would keep the government running for 141 days, but there’s a problem because there are 224 more days left in the year.” (Walter E. Williams, 2011)

Giving money to people who don’t have it isn’t the answer. In 2005 Wayne Powers created the documentary *Reversal of Fortune*, in which a homeless man gets \$100,000, and is free to use it as he sees fit.

“It begins with the introduction of Ted Rodrigue, a homeless man living under a bridge in California. He begins by describing an

average day of "survival" for him, which consists of collecting cans and bottles for recycling in order to eat, buy cigarettes, and beer for the day. He informs the audience that an average day brings in about \$25, while a good day might see as much as \$35."

You get to see how the homeless man spends all the money.

The film ends by telling the viewer that, six months after finding the money, Ted refuses to disclose his latest bank balance; however, his sisters fear that it is less than \$5,000.

On a 2006 airing of The Oprah Winfrey Show entitled: "Are You Ready For a Windfall?", Ted and Wayne Powers were on the program to promote the documentary and speak on their account of the experiment. When asked by Oprah how much of the \$100,000 he still had, Ted replied "none." Ted also mentioned that he is homeless again, and content with his current circumstances."

(Wik17)

You would think that giving someone that much money would set them up for a better life, but it didn't. The problem was that the homeless man never learned the value, or the purpose of money. He never learned how to add value to society, or the marketplace, and in essence, he remained a net drain on the economy while getting a handout. He became an economic producer again once he started adding value by collecting cans and bottles for recycling to earn a living and provide for himself.

If banks are going to print money out of thin air, and lend it out at a profit, if money truly is a public utility for people, then there is absolutely no reason why the US Treasury can't decide to give each and every person a minimum amount of money each month. This way people can pay for a roof over their head, and for food to eat every day.

In order for it to be fair, everyone needs to get the same amount. Of course, there will always be people who aren't satisfied with that basic income. They will naturally want to earn more. Achievers want nicer homes, better cars, and to eat out at fine restaurants. That's fine, because it doesn't hurt anyone, and they're free to earn as much as they want to.

Rich people will have the choice to decline the UBI, if they choose, and grant it back to the government if they want to. They can give it away to charity if they want to, or do whatever they want with it.

Universal Basic Income is an idea that needs more thought, discussion and it needs to be tested properly before we can gradually introduce a system like that. Fractional Reserve Banking could be gradually phased out or we could keep it and use a combination of both to make sure the money supply in circulation remains stable – but it's something that each of us should be thinking about and discussing with others.

Supply and Demand

One of the basic fundamentals of the economy is the flux between supply and demand. The cost of anything will rise when the demand for it exceeds the supply. The cost falls when the opposite happens. When unemployment is high, wages are low. When employment is high, wages rise as companies compete and have to pay more to attract employees.

If we look at the unemployment rate, we have politicians saying that they need to raise the minimum wage so that people will be able to earn a living wage and be able to pay their bills. Again, most politicians don't understand the monetary system or how it functions. They're trying to institute a fix when the real problem is in the market.

Why is unemployment high when the wages are low? Well, there are lots of people looking for a limited number of jobs and when there are more people looking for work than there are jobs, the employers can pick and choose who they want to hire, and they get really highly qualified people for really low pay because there's a lot of competition for wages. When the unemployment is lower, then wages must be higher because companies have to compete for a finite number of workers and they've got to pay more to attract employees.

That's a structural problem in our monetary system and the money supply that's circulating in the economy. The good news is the economy is still on its way to recovering, so what you're starting to hear a lot more these days of is that companies are having a hard time finding qualified employees. They're having to pay more for people.

A company is in business to make a profit. If you're paying your employees \$30 an hour because you want to be 'a nice guy,' it's a very noble thing to do, but if you're in an industry where you're competing against other companies paying people \$10 per hour, and

they have tons of people willing to work for \$10 an hour, their costs are going to be a lot lower than yours and it's nice to be noble, but the bottom line is if you're overpaying your employees and your competition is paying them a third, you're eventually going to go out of business and you're not going to be able to compete.

People need to understand the economy, because there is so much bullshit, and dishonesty disguised with big economic words. Bankers talk about 'special investment vehicles,' 'derivatives,' 'tapering,' 'increase liquidity,' 'deflationary spiral,' 'inflation,' 'deflation,' 'quantitative easing,' and so on. They complicate it on purpose, because a hundred years ago, the bankers wanted it that way. They didn't want to freely admit to the population that banks create money out of thin air.

Instead of calling the money that has been created out of thin air by the Federal Reserve Bank and lent to the US Treasury at interest, 'The National Debt of the United States', we should rename it, label it and call it for what it actually is, 'The US Treasury Created Money Supply.' It's never going to be paid back anyway. To pay it back would mean reducing the money supply in circulation in the economy. This would cause the economy to contract. The US Treasury could also simply print special coins of a trillion dollar denomination each, and give them to the Federal Reserve Bank to pay off the national debt in full. Pundits and politicians alike who endlessly screech about debt and burdening our children with it, need to be ignored because they're talking out of their asses and don't understand what the purpose of money is, where it comes from, how it's created, how it circulates and how the financial and banking system actually works.

I personally believe that we collectively, as humanity, need to better understand the machinery of the economy, and government, just like we need to understand how health and our bodies work, in order to be healthy. If we all did that, the world will be a better place.

Half the population is interested in a government solution to everything – controlling everything. The other half just want to be left the hell alone. They want the freedom to live their lives and spend their money the way they choose to. They want to use their resources to help the people that they want – and not cede that power to a central government.

“Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it.”

~ Thomas Paine, The American Crisis (1777)

Joint Venture Loans

The financial crises jolted the global banking industry from a period of relative calm and prosperity into one of great uncertainty. One thing became clear from all of this: The way the banking system works needs to change.

One possible way to do it is to redefine the way banks handle the nasty and messy business of foreclosure, and how we see the ownership of property. As we said, money is a public utility to facilitate commerce and store value. The aim is to get a more balanced circulation of money in our economy.

As it is today, when people can no longer make their mortgage payments, banks will always foreclose on the property – and as we’ve seen, this is a lose-lose situation. The homeowner loses the house, much of their investment, and the bank loses much of the value of that property too.

A better way to do it is to create a kind of Joint Venture agreement between the bank and the homeowner. Both parties have a vested interest in making the agreement work – as a partnership. At any time a person who is buying and owns a house, should be able to switch from paying a regular mortgage, and paying interest, and have the opportunity to renegotiate a different kind of Joint Venture agreement with the bank.

It’s not a nice thing to kick a person out of their house – and that should always be the very last resort. At the end of the day, money was created to serve the people. Sometimes people become incapacitated, fall sick, get injured, lose their job, or experience problems that make it impossible to pay the mortgage.

Say for example you bought a house for \$100,000, and put 10% of the cost down – then you own 10% of the house, and the bank owns 90%. The foreclosure procedure erodes a lot of that value – so why

not change the agreement to a Joint Venture partnership? Whenever they do eventually sell the property, the profits are divided up fairly, in proportion to the percentage of ownership. The bank reclaims what it owns, and the homeowner gets his fair share too.

If the bank doesn't like the risk, they don't make the loan in the first place. It would be great to be able to use the banking app of your bank lender to simply slide a digital switch on the app to change from a traditional amortized loan, to a joint venture agreement and back, based upon the borrowers needs and the property's current market value.

The point is – whatever solution we come up with, it needs to serve the people, and work to create more security, and a healthier overall national economy.

We need financial systems where the goal is a win-win situation for banks and property owners alike.

When the financial crisis happened, a lot of people were facing foreclosure – but in the end, the banks allowed many of those families to stay on in their properties, hoping to recoup some of their losses eventually when the economy recovered and the properties regained their pre-crash values. This was done out of necessity so the banks could defer or stagger their financial losses on foreclosures since banks only record losses against their bottom lines when they sell the properties after they get them back in foreclosure – but perhaps it shows another possible route to take in the future of banking.

Making money is 80% Psychology and 20% Mechanics

How you *perceive* yourself, and the extent to which you believe in yourself makes most of the difference, where it comes to money. If you firmly believe that you're worthy of becoming wealthy and successful, you'll create the story in your head that will facilitate that happening.

Conversely, if you don't truly believe you're worthy, you will create a very different story in your head. You're not going to naturally attract success to yourself. You'll be thinking: "Success is for somebody else. I've got to be realistic." People literally talk themselves out of being successful.

The other 20% of making money is the pure mechanics of it.

In this new journey to success as a life coach, the right mindset was more or less in place from the start. I had to learn a few new things, I will admit, but I was sure it would work out in the end. That confidence was coming from my successes earlier in life and understanding the science of high achievement, but I struggled with the mechanics, because I was in uncharted business territory.

I knew I had a great product, and useful information to share with people, but getting it to sell was tough. I had to try lots of different ways to market the value I had to offer to the world. Even so, I strongly believed that through trial and error I would eventually find the right way to do it.

That's also why it makes sense to do an internship, or model your business mechanics on successful people who've done it before. If you can find someone who has already walked the path, and made all the mistakes, it saves you a lot of hassle, and speeds up your learning curve tremendously.

Find people, who already have the kind of success you want, and shadow them, model them and what they do successfully, pick their brains, or ask for advice. If you can't do that, work for them, so you can earn while you learn.

That's what I did when I wanted to learn how to find, fix-up and sell houses for a profit. By working for the company I found, I got paid to learn. They had been in the industry for seven years, and had made all the mistakes already. They had already lost hundreds of thousands of dollars making mistakes, figured out what works and what doesn't. If I had stayed on my own, I would never have achieved the same level of success. In essence, I got the benefit of the seven years of experience, and the hundreds of deals that they had done already. I learned the key differences that make all the difference.

To illustrate: The difference between me and a pro golfer like Tiger Woods or Jack Nicklaus is only two millimeters. That tiny difference in the swing will make the golf ball land on the fairway, or in the rough every time. That's the difference that counts.

As an entrepreneur, you have to find that key.

This was going to be my challenge with selling my first book. After I paid Gary Halbert to come up with the perfect sales copy, I took his advice, spent \$6,000, and put an advert in *Penthouse* Magazine.

The results weren't great. I ended up making back only half of what I spent, so I decided to try again with a different magazine. I spent money again placing adverts in *Men's Fitness*, which cost somewhere between \$10,000 and \$12,000. I only made back half of that in sales again – constantly spending more than I was earning.

It was an expensive learning curve, but I stayed positive, and tried lots of different permutations. I tried Google Pay-per-click too, which wasn't going anywhere either.

In my mind I was like Thomas Edison. I was one step closer to finding the right combination that would make my ‘light bulb’ work, even if it took plenty of failed attempts.

Between the summers of 2006 and 2007 I advertised in magazines everywhere, but nothing was working. My cash supply was starting to dwindle, so my time was limited.

Meanwhile there had been some fortunate developments with the sale of the office building. In 2007, my partner James stayed in contact with the group of attorneys who had originally wanted to buy our office building. To James’s credit, he did really well on that front, and he is probably the sole reason why we got the property sold in the end.

One of the main attorneys in the firm contacted James, and when they finally signed a contract on their own property, they agreed to buy ours again. They had really loved the building, and it made sense for them to move there. I was down in South Florida by then, while James was talking the partners into doing the deal.

In the end we sold the property to them for \$2.5 million. They came back into the deal for the original terms, and didn’t really forfeit their deposit. We lost all the interest expenses for the additional two years that we carried the property, but the payday at the end of it was worth it.

I was able to pay off the debts I had made with my bookkeeper friend, and with my dad. At the end of the day I was left with just less than \$100,000 after all was said and done.

Back to Orlando

“The only easy day was yesterday.”

~ Navy SEAL Motto

When my lease expired in 2007 I decided to leave Boca Raton and move back up to Orlando.

I took my BMW X5 and my Ski Nautique boat, a few personal effects, and found a really small one bedroom place. I leased furniture, because I didn't own any at the time, and moved in.

I still had lots of time on my hands, and was continuing to experiment with Google Pay-per-click ad campaigns, and changing my landing page. All of my efforts were focused on finding the right way to sell books. All of my experience in business told me that getting clients was purely a result of the right kind of advertising and marketing.

Unfortunately, this time around I didn't have a steady income to carry me through the trial and error phase. I simply couldn't continue to throw \$10,000 or \$20,000 against the wall every month until the sales took off.

The old advertising adage says that, “advertising is an investment.” In the real estate business we used to spend a lot on advertising, on radio, television and billboards. We found that, on average, it took five to six months from TV advertising to closing a sale and / or originating a mortgage, and it took time for things to pick up and become profitable. I was racking my brain, trying to figure out what I could do.

Tragedy Strikes Again

When the weekend rolled around, I hooked up the boat to my car, and went over to a friend's house near Lake Monroe in Sanford. A couple of us were going to hang out on the boat, along with Andy and Frank who had worked with me before. The weather was beautiful, and it was the middle of summer. Everything was set for a perfect day.

As we were getting ready to leave, the phone rang, and it was my dad. I could tell by his voice that the worst had happened once again.

“Corey,” He said, “Cheryl’s dead.”

It was my dad’s fiancé, and she had committed suicide. At the time my dad was around 59 years old, and she was a little younger, about 54 years old. As I held the phone, my heart sank to my boots. Could this really be happening?

As my father explained what had happened, I learned that this wasn’t her first suicide attempt, although he had never told me about the other times. Cheryl had a manic depressive personality, and since the age of 21 she had attempted suicide four times. She had stopped using her anti-depressant medication some time ago, because she thought it was all in the past. The two of them were in love, and set to get married and live happily ever after, but sadly it was not to be.

Cheryl used to do permanent makeup for people – that was her profession, and she used a type of local anesthetic for work. As I later found out, a few months earlier, she had ingested several bottles of those. My dad hadn’t heard from her for a while, and when he went over to check on her, he found her curled up in a ball, with the empty bottles all around. He called 911, and the ambulance arrived. Paramedics pumped her stomach, and gave her charcoal to absorb the toxins in her system. She survived that, and went into therapy for a week or two. She felt really bad about it when she got out, and had

gone back onto medication, but the two of them never talked about it to me. I had been down to see them just recently, and there was no indication that all of this was going on. We had just celebrated a holiday together two weeks before, and everything seemed fine.

Cheryl had a daughter who was about 19 years old at the time. She left a suicide note for her daughter, telling her not to come inside her room, and to call the police. When the police arrived, they broke the door down, and found her body inside. She had used a ski rope from a beam over the closet to hang herself. This was her fifth attempt, and it was successful.

Strangely enough, just like with the last phone call from my dad, only moments after I put down the phone, I got a call from one of my ex-girlfriends. When my mother had died, and after my father had called on that occasion, the same thing had happened.

“You have great timing,” I told her.

“What? You mean somebody else has died?”

I told her the story, which seemed unbelievable at the time. I had no idea of Cheryl’s mental and emotional state, because my father never told me anything about it. It was a complete shock. It was only later that I found out about the previous suicide attempts.

I felt really bad for my dad. The two of them had seemed happy, and it wasn’t until after she committed suicide that I learned about the depression, and all the history.

My mother’s schizophrenia had gotten really bad in 1999 before she finally kicked my dad out of the house. My father had decided to stop fighting with someone who refused to admit that she had mental problems. He figured that he would just run the businesses, and send her share of the profits in cash, so she could live out her life as she wanted to. Now this had happened. A few days later I went back down for the funeral.

Trial and Error

Back in Orlando I resumed my efforts to market my book, and my coaching services. It was back to trial and error, trying different things, figuring out the right way to succeed. I wanted to concentrate on the book, and only do a small amount of coaching on the side. What I had learned about dating and relationships, about masculinity, and how to be a man had been such a paradigm shift for me, and I was still convinced that success was no more than a month or two away.

It just never happened that way.

“Impatience never commanded success.”

~ Edwin H. Chapin

Like Michelangelo’s block of marble, chipping away day after day, it was going to be a lengthy process. I couldn’t believe how hard it was, how much I was struggling, and how long it was taking.

We tend to over-estimate what we can accomplish in a year, but underestimate what we can accomplish in a decade.

Some of the people who knew me were snickering and sneering behind my back. They thought I was out of my mind. A good friend of mine told me, years afterwards, that he thought I was nuts for doing what I did. But I stuck with it, despite what people thought or said behind my back.

I looked at what other people were doing in the industry, to gain a fresh perspective, and to find new ideas to try.

After I had completed my book, I discovered a whole niche that I never knew existed. People were doing pickup boot camps, taking guys out to bars, and nightclubs, teaching guys how to talk to girls, and get their numbers, helping them get dates.

At that point in my life it wasn't the most appealing career direction I could imagine, although I was willing to try, if that's what the market wanted.

In a sense, I saw myself as a father figure already, because I had this great relationship with the daughter of a woman I used to date. I felt like I had checked the box on being a dad, even though she wasn't my own child. I still saw her from time to time, even though the relationship had ended four or five years before with her mother.

Going to bars was no longer appealing to me. The last thing I wanted to do at 37 years old was go to a nightclub. In my twenties it would have been great, but now I was at a different place in my life, so it wasn't appealing to me at all.

Andy and I discussed the business idea. He was more of a hunter, and loved the idea of going to nightclubs. I was more of a spiritual person who experiences love at first sight, fate and serendipity. The universe always brought the perfect kind of woman into my life at the perfect time. The thought of going to nightclubs and teaching guys how to pick up women was about as appealing to me as watching paint dry, but Andy was up for it.

We kicked the idea around a little. Andy had changed a lot since we had worked together before, and he had been humbled when the real estate market went into the shitter. Together we came up with a plan.

We were going to run an infomercial, showing the results of coaching, healthy eating, along with Network Chiropractic treatments in the space of a week or two. We agreed that it would be an attractive idea, and we could visually get the idea across to people. The changes were visible, and amazing to see, and it would make a great advertisement.

I brought in two previous clients that I had worked with, Mark and Dave, and set about producing the ad. We filmed the show over the

course of just over a week. It was called “From dud to stud in four days,” and it’s still available on my website and YouTube channel.

Dominick, my Network Chiropractor was kind enough to provide his services for two or three times a day. His treatments had the expected results – it got both of them right out of that stressed, fearful state, which shows in their body language and physiology, and it was as if they were different people afterwards.

The transformation was absolutely amazing to see. At the start of the video the two of them didn’t look very confident, or sure of themselves at all. We took them out, coached them, helped them make better fashion choices, and got them haircuts, plus the Network care treatments. We walked them through the process, and then it was time to put it all into practice at the venue.

Sure enough, after a little while, Dave met someone. In no more than a minute, he was making out with this woman.

“That’s never happened to me before!” He told us afterwards.

I figured I could use the show to demonstrate to people exactly what my work could do for them. The combination of looking after your body, the right mindset and techniques, eating high-energy types of foods, and getting Network Chiropractic treatments can transform you. It gets you to access higher regions of your brain and physiology.

The base of the brain is the automatic, animalistic part – the home of the ‘flight or fight’ response. The mid-section of the brain is occupied with managing the brain’s awareness of your body, and the frontal lobe is where the higher thought processes take place. This is where you connect with the heart, and start living authentically. Most human beings are locked into the fight or flight type of response throughout their lives. Everything they encounter meets with the same response.

I booked about four shows on the local station, and waited to see what would happen.

In the meantime I had invested in a piece of real estate – a condo, with a \$60,000 deposit. The original developer passed away, and his company got sold off to a new developer. The new group decided to change the development into a ‘Condotel’ – a combination of a condominium and a hotel. Legally they had to pay back the deposits, because they changed the intended use of the property.

I had invested several years before, so it was actually great news for me. I got all of those funds back, just when I really needed the money. I spent some of it on the production of the show.

I used around \$20,000 on the first month of infomercials, and a similar amount on the production. I was getting VIP tables at the venues where we were filming, so I could set up monitors, and we could check the image and the audio quality while we were shooting. It worked really well.

I was charging around \$995 for a four-day boot camp. It was similar to what other people were doing, and I thought if they could do it successfully, I could easily do the same.

After the first advertisements ran, I sat by the phone, waiting for it to start ringing off the hook...

And so I waited...

I think I sold about a dozen books, which made the return on the investment only two or three hundred dollars. I talked to a couple of people, and did a few phone coaching sessions, but it wasn't a financial success, by a long stretch.

The advertisement was running after a show that had the wrong kind of demographic – a more mature viewer group, and besides that, it

was just not working as I had hoped. I didn't have the finances to keep running the ads, so it was back to the drawing board once again.

It was very demoralizing, and depressing. I had all this experience, but everything that had worked in the past just wasn't working for the new business.

To top it off, my living arrangements were getting complicated. Dave, Mark and I were all renting at Andy's place. As I wrote about earlier in the book, I had let Andy stay at my house rent-free for more than a year. The tables had turned, though, and things had changed.

I remember talking to Andy around that time – he wanted everybody to move out, because he was getting serious with his girlfriend. Mark found a place somewhere else, and Dave and I moved to another house with a friend of his.

It had been ten years since I lived with anyone other than my girlfriends, but I was trying to cut expenses, and live like a broke college student. In the end, I thought it was worth the sacrifice.

Meanwhile the marketing trial and error process had to continue. I was trying online affiliate marketing, and sales pages. At one point the sales went through the roof, and I was suddenly selling dozens of books a day – in fact, several hundred in a week. I thought I had finally figured out the right business model, and excitedly went around telling everyone the news. But I was jumping the gun.

Next thing I knew, I went to the post office, and there were three or four books waiting for me marked 'return to sender.' It had never happened before, so I was a little puzzled, and surprised. Some of them hadn't even been opened yet. The packages had just been sent back. What did it mean?

Turns out, the affiliate marketing company I was working with was behind it all. The following week there were two entire boxes of

returns – with 30 or 40 books that had been sent back. It was unbelievable. I set about investigating what had happened.

I eventually figured out that the affiliate company was fraudulently ordering the books, claiming the commission, and then returning the books to me, unopened. They could claim discount coupons, or get a small commission on each sale – but they had no real interest in the product. It was blatant fraud, but there was very little I could do about it. I lost thousands of dollars paying the fraudulent affiliate sales commissions, the mailing costs, plus the books were damaged in the process.

It was an expensive lesson, and it seemed like things were just getting worse and worse on every front.

One of the guys who was sharing the rent with us disappeared, and Dave and I had to cover his portion of the rent, which wasn't going to happen. We had to get out of that lease agreement. Fortunately the landlords were very gracious about it – a lucky break amidst all the setbacks.

I was planning to move in with Frank, and one night we were over there, talking about this and that. At one point Frank started arguing with me. He really got in my face, and the conversation turned ugly.

“You’ve been hanging on to this idea of yours for three years, and it isn’t going anywhere, you’re not making any money,” he was shouting at me, belittling me, and attacking my character.

I knew he was stressed out because his house was in pre-foreclosure, but it was no excuse. I knew enough about people to know that it was a clear warning sign. Why would I want to surround myself with people like this? I had already learned that lesson well enough with my business partners.

I decided it was a really bad idea to move there. He called me the next day, and I told him that I had decided to move back to Florida

with my dad instead, while I figured out my next move. There was simply no reason for me to move in with a belligerent jackass.

I want to enjoy my life, and my peace of mind and my happiness is of the utmost importance. I no longer needed to make those kinds of bad choices.

I packed up my stuff, and moved back down to my dad's place.

I was slowly running out of money, but the last thing I wanted to do was go and find a job somewhere.

I still had three or four payments to make on my car before it was paid off. There was a little stream of income from my website, and my sales, but the \$1,000 per month just wasn't enough to survive on.

In the background of my life, and in the back of my mind, I was searching for something. I still kind of felt as if I needed to reach the next level of spiritual enlightenment, as it were, and I still had a couple of spiritual questions that needed answers.

"Energy and persistence conquer all things."

~ Benjamin Franklin

Finding Answers

“The Tao is unpredictable to those that live according to plans. Only those who have no agenda are in harmony with the Tao.”

~ Lao Tzu, Father of Taoism

I was constantly on the lookout for ways to expand my mind, and I discovered an Indian spiritual teacher called Panache Desai. A lot of people were saying good things about him, and the kind of energy he inspired in others.

He actually calls himself “a vibrational catalyst, allowing people to tune into an energy that helps them to recognize and embody their truly infinite potential.”

When he was younger, he was earmarked by spiritual teachers in India for a special destiny, helping people to awaken to a deeper spiritual reality.

I attended a two-day event in Orlando to find out for myself. As part of the proceedings, he would go around the room and touch people lightly on the head. When he touched me, I felt this energy flowing through me. The only other time I had felt anything comparable was with the Network Chiropractic sessions. It was an eye-opener.

Perhaps most importantly, I learned something very valuable from that experience in terms of dealing with the way people thought about me. I learned not to let that affect me negatively anymore. I finally got to a place where I just stopped giving a crap about what people thought of me. It was a hugely positive breakthrough.

Despite the fact that my business was going absolutely nowhere at the time, and that I was swiftly running out of money, it was a shift in the way I thought about spirituality.

Some people have a huge misconception about what spirituality, and enlightenment is really about. They imagine that a spiritual, or an enlightened person walks around on a cloud. There's supposed to be this constant, happy, Zen state of enlightened bliss, every moment for the rest of your life. Synchronicity and happiness will never leave you, and nothing bad will ever happen. That's not exactly accurate.

I learned that the purpose of life is to enjoy it, to enjoy the experience of being alive – good days or bad.

“Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it. Do not believe in anything simply because it is spoken and rumored by many. Do not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.”

~ Sayagyi U Ba Khin, paraphrase from the Buddha's Kalama Sutta

Men in particular try to run away from uncomfortable, nasty or difficult emotions. Men are taught to suck it up, to appear resigned, and to always give the impression that they're strong. They will avoid situations and conversations that bring those feelings to light. They will stoically pretend that nothing is wrong.

The way to get past those uncomfortable feelings, though, is not by avoiding them. It's by going directly through them.

What you resist in life will persist, but what you look at bravely, and embrace will be healed.

You've got to feel it to heal it.

The teachings of Panache Desai and Eckhart Tolle were constantly on my mind during this time. They helped me to deepen and widen my ideas about spirituality, and about leading an enjoyable, fulfilling life that's pleasing to me, unaffected by the opinions and labels of others.

The pressing need for answers was eased, some of the blanks were filled in, and I no longer felt as if I had pressing spiritual questions that needed answers. My spiritual journey was evolving, and that gave me a tremendous sense of peace, despite the fact that if my business didn't take off soon, I would have to go and find another job.

I was literally running out of money at that point. Back in 2006 I cashed out my retirement to keep me going for a couple of months, and pay the mortgage payments that needed to be paid. By now it was 2009. I never imagined that I would be going through these kinds of difficulties for such a long time.

On my journey, and on this part of it especially, I learned something incredibly important, which I always make a point of sharing with all of my clients and audience:

When you feel bad, and you're filled with shitty emotions, the worst thing you can do is try to avoid it.

If you try to run away from circumstances, and from feelings, you will never solve them. The best way to get out of it is to really get into it. That means really feeling, and embracing the depth of your emotions.

When you feel sad and depressed – be honest about it, and face it bravely. Openly admit to yourself that you feel shitty, or hopeless. Say it out loud:

“Life sucks right now and this is how I feel. I feel like it’s never going to get any better. I feel like it’s never going to work out.”

By saying these things, and allowing space for them to exist, you begin to move past them. If you feel like you need to cry or shout – do that. Put a pillow over your face, if you need to, and cry and scream about it at the top of your lungs. It’s acceptable. Express whatever emotion you feel without any judgment. Really embrace the depth of your suffering. Be okay with your emotions, and don’t pretend that they don’t exist. Be okay with feeling sad and depressed, and the idea that it might not get any better.

If you think about it honestly, it’s the only sane way to deal with things.

Watch little kids experiencing emotions. They’re completely sincere and honest about it. They’re okay with expressing it. You’ll see them walking around, and then just unexpectedly express joy or excitement, or whatever they feel, spontaneously. If a kid sees a puddle, it’s only natural to want to splash in it, with a whoop of joy. When a kid falls and scrapes a knee, there is an instant outburst of feeling. The mother comes over and sits down, totally present, and acknowledges the minor crisis, but makes the child feel safe and protected, validated and loved. The pain isn’t avoided, but it is accepted, and dealt with in a loving way.

As we talked about in the section about Network Chiropractic Care, when we experience emotional or physical trauma, and it doesn’t feel safe, we avoid it, and we store that energy as muscle tension in the nervous system. When this is constantly repeated, the spine and nervous system gets armored.

When I first started Network Chiropractic care, I had this huge lump in the middle of my back near my emotional center. With all the entrainments from Dr. Dominick D’Anna, and Dr. Epstein, that lump went away. Those entrainments really helped with all my

relationships. I got along better with my dad, and with my girlfriends. It helped me to open up, and become more spontaneous and natural.

Cultivating this kind of mindset in your life helps you become completely present with other human beings, to just be there, instead of thinking about a million other things. The monkey brain is always active:

“Did I leave the stove on? Did I pay my bill? Did I turn the iron off before I left? Is the garage door closed?”

I learned to embrace my emotions – all of them, the good ones and the bad ones, just like a child does. *If you feel it, you heal it.*

Feeling bad, crying, or feeling negative is really just a matter of energy that is stuck. If you accept the energy, if you love the energy, you can transform it – you can free it up to flow naturally again. If you enthusiastically embrace your suffering, your depression and shitty feelings, and just focus on it, instead of trying to run from it, you can heal.

We all sometimes experience difficult feelings, and find ourselves sitting on the couch, staring at the ceiling, or maybe sitting in a car out in the parking lot. All these thoughts and feelings are going through you. You hate your job, and your boss. Inside you’re telling yourself: “I hate my life, I hate my boss and my fucking job, it’s never going to change or get any better, it sucks, I feel so depressed, I feel awful inside...”

It’s so important that you’re expressing those emotions, and facing them, verbalizing them and aligning with that vibration, and accepting it without judgment. It’s important not to avoid reality, but to embrace it with love.

I learned more about it from Sri Amma Bhagvan.

When you avoid reality – when you’re not accepting the present moment exactly as it is, you’re creating suffering. That’s what happens with the average person. So many things have happened that they weren’t ready to embrace or accept, that they never felt safe or comfortable experiencing, that it never healed. Over time all that unresolved trauma – whether it’s emotional, mental or physical – just gets stored in the body as muscle tension in the nervous system, hunching them over into a depressed type of physiology, and makes them feel like hell.

Embracing the feeling, ‘embracing the suck,’ and accepting it for what it is, has the opposite effect. Instead of running away from an unpleasant experience, you feel the depth of the experience, grateful that you’re alive and able to feel, and accepting things the way they really are, without adding to it, or subtracting from it.

Through these teachings I realized that it’s okay to have a bad day. It’s acceptable, and inevitable that you’re going to have a shitty day. Sometimes life just sucks – it feels hopeless, and you wonder – why even go on? It isn’t always sunshine and roses.

As a man, if you don’t feel like you can accomplish your purpose, you feel useless. I think every guy, if they are completely honest, has had those kinds of feelings. There are times when you wonder whether you should just end it all, if things don’t work out. It feels like your life is over.

In that terrible moment when Brian told me to file for bankruptcy, I felt that way. I thought it was the end – I was ruined, my life was over, it would never get any better.

You have to remember that your greatest resource is your resourcefulness, but before you can actually get to that point, you first have to accept the bad feelings, and the circumstances. You have to go deeply into the shitty feelings in order to get out of them. You

need to be present with them. The first time you do it, you may want to lie in bed for hours, or perhaps it might be for just twenty minutes.

When you give yourself permission to feel those horrible things, whatever they are, then only do things begin to change. Life is constant change, and it's never going to stay the same.

One of my favorite songs is Simple Man, by Lynyrd Skynyrd. He expresses this idea in the lyrics.

*“Take your time...don't live too fast
Troubles will come and they will pass
Go find a woman and you'll find love
And don't forget son
There is someone up above”*

Shitty times don't last forever, and neither do good times. The reality is that whatever you build in this life, everything and everyone that you love will eventually turn to dust. It's all temporary. Nothing endures, except change. That's neither a good thing nor a bad thing – it is just what it is, and it needs to be accepted.

We all have a limited time in this life, and a finite lifespan on this earth. The best possible thing to do is to find a way to give your life away in service to other people, and to find a way to enjoy your life. Besides helping others, you make your own life meaningful, and fulfilling – and most of all - enjoyable.

The purpose of life is exactly that. When people ask me about the purpose of life, I always say that life is meant to be *enjoyed*. It's about finding the value in every day, in every moment – whether good or bad. Enjoy all of it. The great days, the amazing days, and

even the shitty, awful days are amazing too, if you know how to look at them.

Those shitty days help you appreciate the good ones. How can you know what “up” is without being “down?”

There are so many different states of mind through the entire experience of life. There’s good, and there’s bad, and there’s ‘kind of okay.’ Then there are all those states we don’t recognize – left and right, and in the middle. Most days are somewhere in between, and even if they are not remarkable – it’s important to embrace all of it, and not get stuck in trying too hard to make every day fit into a predetermined, perfect template.

You don’t always have to be happy, and you don’t always need to be ‘up.’ You don’t always have to feel like everything is great – and you don’t have to avoid bad feelings.

It’s actually an art to suffer consciously.

The more you learn to embrace your suffering, the more natural it becomes. It’s a matter of letting go of the resistance you feel inside. It may take a few hours, or maybe even a day or two the first time you try it. You’ll notice that it gets easier, though. The more you do it, the shorter those bad times last, and the less they cloud your day.

Everybody has had a day when they get out of bed and life just seems tedious, unbearable, and you feel like hell. When you embrace that feeling, or ‘embrace the suck,’ so to speak, you simply allow it to exist, *without judging it*. You merely accept the things you can’t change, the feelings that are really there, and let them go – then you soon feel better. You get to see that it’s temporary, and that it dissolves away.

Along with your acceptance, the change comes. It might consume your attention for five or ten minutes, but then twenty minutes later, you’ll find yourself sitting there, thinking about a girl you used to

date, or thinking about the beach, or something funny you saw on television. You realize, on some level:

“Wait a minute! I was miserable just a moment ago. It felt like my life was over, but I’ve completely forgotten about it. And it’s so weird, I’ve only just realized that I’ve completely forgotten about it.”

It’s quite an amazing discovery. When you are able to really get into it, and really experience it – when you don’t resist the suffering, but embrace all of your reality wholeheartedly, for exactly what it is, the suffering begins to dissolve.

It’s just a fleeting moment in time – and it’s beautiful.

It’s such a strange experience to live through. Intellectually you can get a sense of it, even though it might sound ridiculous as you read this, or listen to it, but when you actually try it, you will be amazed.

It blows me away every time I do it. Sometimes I wake up feeling like things are not really going my way, I’m not happy. When I notice it, I know exactly what to do.

I just really get into it, embracing the feelings, just like a child does, and ten minutes later I’m thinking about the beach, feeling elated.

I’ve completely forgotten about that negativity, because I embraced it, and let it run its course without interfering or judging. I felt the energy move through my body, so it didn’t get stuck in my nervous system – and it is gone.

It was just one moment in time, and now it’s over. It’s about staying in the present moment, and not allowing yourself to keep mulling over the past, constantly perpetuating those negative feelings. Ironically – it’s the very attempt to ignore negativity, or shitty feelings, that actually makes them last longer than they need to.

“Quiet the outer world, so that the inner world might bring you sight.” ~ Neale Donald Walsch

(Neale Donald Walsch spent the majority of his life building a successful career, and thriving professionally, yet searching for spiritual meaning. Then he started paying attention to the spirit, and wrote an incredible book that spent over two and a half years on the New York Times Best Sellers List, called *Conversations with God: An Uncommon Dialogue*. It's a must read for any serious spiritual seeker.)

When I coach professional athletes, I work with them so they can focus on and stay in the present moment during competition.

You will find some of the greatest sports coaches always repeating the phrase: "Next play, next play."

That's all anyone really has any influence over. If one of the players has a bad play, he can become distracted, thinking about what he did wrong, or what he should have done instead. That just detracts from the present moment, and adds nothing to it because he has become emotionally hijacked by the past. You have to fight, and work for every moment of every possession, and make the most of that possession when you have it. No matter what you're involved in, whether it's playing baseball, or if it's somebody in the NFL – no matter what, you have to focus on each and every present moment. Even if you struck out the last three times – you're at bat right now, in this moment, and you have another chance.

Try something else, and keep on trying.

As horrible as things were going at that point in my business life, there were still people who were reading my books, and more and more were sending me positive feedback, and even stories about how I had changed their lives for the better.

I wasn't moving thousands of books every month, like I do at this point in my life. I was selling a few dozen a month – and with a \$30 book, that doesn't cover the bills. It's a nice hobby, but it's not a

viable way to support a family, build your life, and have the things you want.

I always figured, at the end of the day, no matter how hopeless it seemed, I was no more than a month or two away from things turning around.

I decided to move back with my dad in 2009.

Looking back at it now, I regard it as a gift that I came from a ‘military’ family, and had to experience those difficult childhood years – the years I spent living without love. I’ve come to think of it as a blessing, in a way, that my family didn’t get along.

It took me a while to figure it out, but I can now see that it was a gift that I didn’t get hugs, or hear ‘I love you’ all the time. Anybody that comes from a military family, or knows somebody from one, will know that it instills a kind of discipline in you. You grow up tough.

You have to get really good at enduring being uncomfortable for long periods of the time in the military. You can’t do what you want to do, whenever you want to. You can’t take a shit, or even take a leak without the permission of the drill instructor.

One of my friends who served in the Marine Corps told me that it had actually happened to him during training. He had to go to the toilet really bad, but didn’t get permission. The inevitable happened. He shit his pants of course. It ran all the way down his legs, and as he was doing sit-ups with a fellow Marine Recruit holding his ankles, all he could do was apologize.

“Don’t worry about it man, the same thing happened to me last week.” He had replied. The military life isn’t an easy one.

The gift that came from my father and uncle being in Vietnam, and my grandfather’s and even my great grandfathers being in the wars, was learning to put up with things that sucked and were

uncomfortable. You learn to go without certain comforts and reassurances for days, weeks, months or even years.

In World War II, you didn't simply have to do a tour for six months, and then get to go home on leave for a year. While the war was on, you were deployed until victory or defeat. We either win, or we lose – there's no backing out or time off.

When you get used to going without things, life becomes simpler, and easier, and in that way it's a gift. Even though it wasn't the ideal family to grow up in, I learned to go for years and years without the kind of relationships, without the love and communication that I wanted. I simply got used to going without things.

When I was forced to move back to my dad's place, I felt defeated. It felt as if life had beaten the crap out of me, like I was just a piñata. At times I felt like a zombie walking around.

I had started out on this new journey, thinking I would change the world for the better, and I would be sharing my teachings with millions and millions of people. It was going to make the world a better place. But time was dragging on, and I was still struggling.

I had known nothing but success in the past – even though there were the inevitable ups and downs, but I had never been unsuccessful for such a long time – for this many years. I had never had so much trouble making money, or doing what I wanted.

My childhood experiences, and having learned to go without love, or emotional support, had instilled a certain toughness in me, which helped me to deal with the disappointment. It helped me endure being uncomfortable for all this time.

My life had basically been on hold since I set out on this path. I had been building this million-dollar lakefront house, and then I liquidated everything, completely changed my life, and started a new

business. I had figured that I would be making a six-figure income again within a year or two.

But it was now three years down the line, and counting. It was getting harder and harder to stay positive, and moving in with my dad was going to be challenging.

Still, in the back of my mind I was only three, or at most six months away from success, and would be able to move out, and pick up the pieces again. I just needed some breathing room. It was time to tighten the belt even more. I still had a few things I could sell, to buy me more time.

I had an expensive Bulgari watch, which I hadn't worn for years anyway, and some expensive china, plus a few other high-value things – I sold them all.

I tried the *Men's Fitness* advertisements again, which cost me several thousand dollars – but the results weren't much better than before – I was barely breaking even.

The months rolled on, and I was still paying off my car. To make matters worse, the car needed repairs, and if you're servicing an old BMW, you're in for a minimum of \$1000, no matter what the problem is – I was quickly running out of money.

Temporary Employment

My dad was helping me with money, and I was still making some money with the coaching, at least. I had a few clients, and I was still selling a few books, mostly from referrals.

By the end of October, it started getting to the point where I was looking for a job, out of desperation. I found a sports bar close to my dad's place. My experiences with tending bar, and the havoc that it had wreaked on the skin of my hands, with the bar rot, made me decide to take a job waiting tables for three or four nights a week instead of tending bar.

I could make \$400 or \$500 a week, and that would let me pay my web developers, and leave me with some money to experiment with different landing pages. In three to six months I could move on... Or so I thought.

The sports bar was only a mile away from my dad's condo, and it was a really cool place. We knew some of the people there, because we liked to go there to eat quite often. I thought, if I have to suck it up and get a job – this could be a good solution. I figured I would work the busy shifts, Friday through Sunday nights, when I could get paid the most, and that would still leave me with enough time to concentrate on my coaching business during the day.

I went and spoke to the GM, but they were fully staffed, and couldn't take me right away.

I had learned enough about landing a job to know that it wasn't the end of the story. I asked him when I could check in again, to see if anything had opened up. The busy season was due soon, so he told me to give it a month.

The following month I went back, and he remembered me.

“You sure are persistent.” He said.

“I want to work here,” I replied positively. “It’s a mile down the road from where I live. My dad and I come here to eat all the time, and I love the environment.”

“Alright, I’ll give you a shot.”

It’s the one thing I still used to have nightmares about – waiting tables, and tending bar back at Chuck’s Steakhouse. But there was no way around it. Life was serving me a slice of humble pie, and I had to swallow it.

They started me off as a food runner, and the first night was challenging, to say the least.

My dad and I had been there many times, and it didn’t seem too busy – but that was out of season. I had no idea of what I was in for.

Delray Beach is a holiday destination, and it’s very seasonal. We call the annual visitors “snowbirds” because they flock here in droves, after thanksgiving. The population in this normally sleepy town increases by 75%. They come down for the holidays, and don’t leave until May.

I’d worked in a nice upscale restaurant before, and it was a very different environment from this one. There were plenty of staff members to help when it got busy, and the owner was always on hand. This was something different. The sports bar crammed as many customers into the available space as possible, and worked their staff to the bone.

I started out running food from the kitchen to the tables, so I could get a feel for the layout, and how things worked. It was a Monday night, and there was an ‘early bird’ special, where you paid \$9.99 for anything on the menu, and it was pumping.

There was a minimum of a twenty-minute waiting list, and people just kept coming in. Two or three tables would clear at the same time, and were instantly filled again with new customers. The pressure was immediately on to get the customer's drinks from the bar, clear the tables, and get the orders out.

It was quite a popular sports bar chain in Florida. Most of the people working there were all in their twenties.

At thirty-nine years old, it wasn't a walk in the park for me. I had mostly worked office and desk jobs for the last twenty years, and wasn't used to being on my feet for eight to ten hours at a time, carrying dishes, bottles and ice, and spinning off my feet.

I was in pretty good shape, but it was utterly exhausting. About an hour into my first shift, I was carrying a full stack of plates in my arms out of the kitchen. Right inside the double doors leading to the dining room, there was a heavy, 50-pound rubber mat, and the person who had used the door before me had kicked it up, so it made a thick bubble in the rubber. The design was meant to provide good footing, and all the surrounding floor surfaces outside the doors were sharp and hard. My foot caught it, and I went down.

Trying not to spill food everywhere, I landed on my knees, and ripped my skin off. Blood was running down both my legs. It was a disaster.

Knowing what restaurant bathrooms are like (the bathrooms were ten feet away from the kitchen entrance), you can imagine my dilemma, thinking about all the bacteria, and filth, and with more customers streaming in all the time, I had to find a place to clean up.

As I sat in the office, dressing my wounds, I was thinking:

“Oh my god, this is hell! What have I gotten myself into? This is not for me.”

But there was nothing else to do except suck it up, and carry on. You've just got to grind on through. Ray Lewis, the former NFL linebacker for the Baltimore Ravens once said: "My grind is my rest."

I was thinking of that quote, and even though I wanted to quit, more than anything, I also thought about all the benefits. I had waited two months to get this job. I didn't want to spend money on gas or repairs on my car – which was getting older, and the fact that the sports bar was so close really helped. If something broke on my car, I couldn't afford to fix it. I had to find a way to get through it, no matter what.

I ended up working at the sports bar for about nine or ten months. During the busy season I worked there for at least 30 hours a week, while still working on my business during the daytime.

I had no idea what else to try to grow my business and get out of the situation. I was turning forty, and the prospect of working there for another five years was looming on the horizon.

The months were ticking by, and things weren't getting any better. It was time to up my game, and change my way of thinking.

"I do not think that there is any other quality so essential to success of any kind as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature."

~ John. D Rockefeller, American Oil Tycoon

Exploring New Avenues

As a coach, and coming from an engineering background, I didn't enjoy writing very much, but I couldn't afford to outsource the job at that point. I wanted to write a second book, but the first one still wasn't selling very well.

I really loved what I was doing, but the fact remained – I simply didn't have enough paying customers. I wanted to talk about other things besides dating and relationships – which had never been the only subject I wanted to discuss, or coach people on.

I talked to my web developer, and told him about my ideas. I wanted to share the things I knew about other subjects: I wanted to start a blog and talk about time management, how to get any job you want, about healthy eating and healthy living, things about business, and figuring out your purpose in life.

The web developer modified the website to a WordPress site, and I started writing articles. I changed my thinking completely. Remember – when you change the way you look at things, the things you look at begin to change.

I had about 1,200 people on my email list, which I had gathered since I started. Each time I wrote an article, I emailed it to my subscribers. I wrote three or four blog posts a week, and started studying the biggest and best websites on the net, in order to learn more. The Internet is an invaluable source of news, information and the views and topics are far wider than what was on television or in any library.

I looked at news sites, and found articles on businessinsider.com, about just about everything I was interested in. I particularly enjoyed reading Henry Blodget, an American businessman, investor, journalist, and author.

He occasionally wrote articles about how he had grown *Business Insider* to where it was. He discussed what he had learned, and shared his valuable insights. He wrote about Google search, Amazon Kindle, Facebook, web marketing, YouTube, Amazon Web Services (AWS), how to grow an online presence and audience, Google analytics and tracking code, WordPress, social media, selling advertising on your website with Google AdSense, etc.

The Google ‘bot’ crawls every web page that is rendered, and gathers information about what people are looking at, how long they’re staying on the site, what they’re clicking on, and reading. Google search then has a better idea of whom to suggest your site to in their search results.

I started learning everything I could about the subject while I continued blogging about all the things I was interested in, and that I thought people could benefit from the most.

Many of the people who found me were looking for dating advice, trying to salvage a failing relationship or get an ex back, and I love helping people with that, but there was so much more I could do. I wanted to share what I had learned on my journey – I just had to get all this stuff out of me, and start writing about it. Someday I would write a second book, and eventually expand the business.

And I noticed some changes over the course of three or four months.

What started happening was that, as I wrote about careers, jobs, business partners, health, and other subjects to help people become more well-rounded and happy, I started getting more and more questions from readers.

So I invited my readers to ask more questions, and then answered them in the next blog posts. As I started doing that, I noticed that more and more books started to sell. It was really interesting.

Another unexpected benefit was an increase in traffic from search engines. Learning from Henry Blodget, I incorporated those technical design elements, including the Google Analytics tracking code into my site, and started improving my strategy. I started creating an *information portal* – which is what my site still is today. My website is a coaching and teaching platform.

Everything I had done before, in terms of marketing, could be classified as direct response marketing – in other words, here's a product, here's how you can buy it, and why you should buy it – which really didn't work on the internet. When people go online, they're looking for information, more than anything else.

The more articles I wrote, the better it got. As I consistently added valuable content, I got more and more free search traffic. More people would subscribe to my email newsletter, I sold more books, and more people used my coaching services.

After about three months of doing this, I was making between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a month from my business, and I could finally afford to quit working at the sports bar.

At that point I was already working fewer shifts, since it was the off-season. I would go in on a Friday or Saturday evening, and make \$100-\$150 a night. On a particularly quiet night, it was a lot less than that. Besides, the general manager was hiring good-looking college girls, and once they were employed, he was hitting on them even though he was married. It was great, and a lot of fun to work with a lot of pretty girls who were fun and made the shitty job bearable, and one of the few perks of working there. But when the business owners got wind of what was going on behind the scenes, they demoted him, and employed a new manager.

The new manager was an obese lady, and she started making life hard for all the pretty girls, who then quit or got fired, one after the other. In their place, she hired people who were more like her.

I didn't get along with her, and soon enough she cut some of my shifts. It wasn't fun working there any longer. When she took my closing shifts away, I was making \$20 or \$30 for a three-hour shift. It was no longer worth my time, so it was time to resign.

She didn't seem to care when I told her. In fact, it was probably her intention to get rid of anyone who wasn't willing to kiss her ass. At the same time, my business was finally picking up, so it was a no-brainer. I went out to dinner one night with my dad to celebrate the positive news. I was finally starting to figure out the right way to do it.

“Only passions, great passions, can elevate the soul to great things.”

~ Denis Diderot, French Philosopher

Video Content

It was around 2010 when I started blogging, and I did nothing but write articles. Later in the year I decided to buy camera equipment, a background screen, and an iMac computer so I could move over to making video content.

I wanted to create a YouTube channel to support my blogging. I knew some people preferred watching a video to reading, or following the audio as they read. Some people are auditory, and others are visually minded.

“Make yourself necessary to somebody.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

I was looking at the ESPN site, and I noticed there was usually a video clip, with some text below it. It seemed like a good way to set things up.

In the past, every time I did a recording, I had a professional camera crew doing it for me, and although I was comfortable in front of the camera, I had no idea of how to make videos. I practiced filming myself, and started learning the ropes of doing it on my own.

I was still blogging – and I noticed that I needed to stay consistent. If I took a week off, the free Google search traffic numbers would plummet, and it would take two or three weeks to build it back up again to the same level.

I leased a tiny 100-foot square office for \$250 per month to work from. I moved my equipment over there, because there wasn't enough room at my dad's place. Although I was at least making barely enough to support myself, I was still a long way from making the kind of income I wanted. Most of what I made was going straight

back into the business again. I needed at least \$6 or \$7,000 a month to get there.

I spent a lot of time writing articles with the emails I was getting from people. I had to edit their questions, fix the grammar and spelling, and make sense of it, and then prepare them for the blog. After all of that, I had to spend three to four hours writing the answers in blog form. It was incredibly time consuming.

I subscribed to thinkstock.com to source my images, because I wanted to avoid copyright infringement issues. I wanted magazine quality images for my blog.

Midway through 2011 I started my ‘CoachCoreyWayne’ YouTube channel. I thought of it as an accompaniment to what I was doing, and a good way to get my personality across, as opposed to just writing.

Content is king when it comes to the Internet. I thought of my site as a digital, online newspaper, providing valuable self-help and self-reliance information.

It was interesting to see that even some of my older posts were still attracting plenty of traffic. Each blog post is like a landing page, and once it’s written, and created, Google tracks what happens there. It helps Google to improve their service too – because they want people to have a great web experience. That means they want to direct people to sites that load quickly, and that offer the best information available.

If your website takes forever to open, people will tend to leave. If you have poor, weak or generic copy on your page, people won’t find value, and will quickly leave. The faster your website loads, and the better your content is, and the more you update it with new content – the higher your Google search rankings. You build an audience one person at a time.

If I could compare it to television advertising – people often have to see the ad three or four times before they decide to call and find out more about the product, or go to the store to buy. With a blog, I was giving out the best information I could. Readers and viewers got to learn from my mistakes, and they got to ask questions. When I answered those questions, other people learned from it too.

It's important to be honest about the mistakes you've made. This is really what people learn from the most. There's no point in pretending that you have a perfect life, or that you've never made a blunder. People relate to others who suffer the same problems, and go through the same shit that they do. They don't want to listen to someone who was born with a silver spoon in their mouth. They can't relate to it – but when they hear about all the shit you've endured and overcome, they feel like they can relate to you and follow your example.

It was this approach, and this understanding that made all the difference for me. My audience was now growing steadily.

In July of 2011 I started doing YouTube videos. My perception of YouTube at the time, was that it was just a place for funny, entertaining, or silly videos. I didn't think there was much else there, and it seemed to me as if nobody cared about anything else on YouTube. I never imagined I would make any money with it, or grow my audience substantially from it. I was just blogging, and getting search engine traffic.

My book was self-published through lulu.com, so it was available on Amazon, and people all over the world could order it. It was a print-on-demand book service, so the book was printed and shipped all over the world, as people ordered it. It took about ten days, depending on where you live.

When the YouTube videos started, I didn't notice much change at first. My web traffic was getting busier and busier, but when I asked

people where they found out about me, they told me they were reading my website.

One thing that Gary Halbert had said to me was that – if you want to find out if your product is any good – give it away.

If people don't like it, or won't use it, even if it's free – you know you have to go back to the drawing board – your product sucks, and you need to reinvent it.

With the help of my web-developer, I uploaded a free pdf version of my book to my website. I used the services of scribd.com – who provides a nice little pdf viewer that works well embedded on the members area of my website. I uploaded that, and grabbed the code for the pdf viewer, and we created an email newsletter subscription service.

I allowed people free access to the book, and also gave them access to audio lessons that I created back in 2006. (We also installed a nice audio player on the website to facilitate that). The only way people got to the membership page was by joining the newsletter subscription list, and it allowed them free access to this material. Of course, people could unsubscribe at any time, and read my book for free.

It was another experiment, another possible route, and I was interested to see what would happen. Some people bought the book, and others, booked phone-coaching sessions. I viewed it as a minor victory.

I also put a donate button on my website. It's a fact of reality that a lot of people in the world earn very little – sometimes as little as \$30 a month, and they really can't afford to buy books – but they could make use of the free content, and benefit from it.

I think of it as paying it forward. Maybe years down the line they will be able to return the favor – either to me, or to someone else. I

wanted to make the world a better place, and so why withhold it from people who may need it, but simply couldn't afford the book? I want people not to have to go through the difficulties I've gone through. If I can help accomplish that, it's a rewarding thing.

One of the most rewarding things about this kind of work, is when I get an email from some dude in high school, who's just graduated, or someone who has been married for years, and they tell me that my book has really helped them – maybe even saved their marriage.

Remember – the same rules apply to married couples that apply to everyone else. My coaching helps men get back to the kind of person they were when they first met their partner, and when they fell in love in the first place. Guys think there's a magic formula at work once they're married – "I'm married, so now I have to be different, I don't have to work at it."

No! What you do to get a woman to fall in love with you, is the same thing you do when you're married – to keep her.

Nine times out of ten, when I do phone sessions, the couple is already in marriage counseling, or couple's therapy, or seeing a psychologist. Therapy may have been helpful, but the woman still wants a divorce, or doesn't want to have sex. So they turn to me, and I help to get the guy focused on what really matters to create sexual attraction. My book is really all about how to be a man – what masculine energy is really all about. It's about what a man is supposed to do with his life and how to become more attractive to women by working on himself.

When I get a guy focused – that's exactly what happens. I've had countless clients tell me: "I've been seeing a therapist for years, but I've made more progress with you in one session than in fifteen years of therapy. There are psychologists and therapists who use my book in group therapy, as a teaching tool, because it's a great compliment to the therapy they provide. It helps guys get jobs, and it helps them focus on their unique masculine energy, and understand what

feminine energy is, and how it fits in. It creates the right kind of sexual polarity, and attracts women to them naturally, without having to be something that they're not.

It's incredibly rewarding. I've coached leaders of countries, different members of royal families around the world, people that are diplomats, working in government, military service, CEO's, celebrities, professional athletes, entrepreneurs, etc. – I literally have clients on every continent, and every corner of the globe.

Every day I get comments, whether it's on YouTube, or comments on my blog, or by email – or just positive reviews of my book. Whether it's Audible.com, or Amazon, they post their success stories, and how my work has influenced their lives – and it's incredibly fulfilling.

I knew my book would help people. I knew people needed information – so my website became an information website. Even though I didn't talk directly, in person, to most of the people who visited the site, and even though most of them didn't buy anything – the ones that did made up for it.

As I continued with YouTube, I started noticing that people were finding me – they were reading the information that I was giving away, and wanted to get in touch. People could see the value in what I had to say.

Everything I teach is tried and tested. You get to go and test it for yourself – whether it's a change in behavior, a change in mindset, or in a way of life. People can always verify for themselves that it works.

Take for example what I teach on health – you can experience what it does for your skin, your eyes, your energy levels, mental clarity and your overall sense of well-being. It's not just empty theory – it's practical, and it radically improves your life.

Once people see that something works – they’re far more inclined to buy a phone session, or a digital or paperback copy of the book, or make a donation. Most surprising of all, it started happening more and more that people actually found me on YouTube.

I thought YouTube was only really popular if you had an idiotic, funny video that went viral. I remember watching one with a little boy who bit his brother’s finger in the back seat of the car, and made \$400,000 in advertising revenue. It was mind-boggling. I wasn’t expecting my channel to drive traffic, or boost my sales, or build an audience there, but I started doing YouTube clips for each blog post, and my sales inched upwards.

At first I was only doing paperback books, on the print-to-order system. Then I started reading about Amazon’s Kindle, and learned how popular it was becoming, and how their sales were taking off. I had everything in place, so I put my book on Amazon, in digital format, and soon that was an additional income stream.

A Clean Slate – Everything is Stripped Away

The year 2012 arrived, and business was steadily picking up – but it was still excruciatingly slow. I was only grossing around \$2,500 a month on average.

I had always envisioned that I would be making a healthy six-figure income within a matter of months. When I think back to how the real estate business had started – it was the same thing. It really took years to grow to the scale it ended on.

It all goes back to being able to endure being uncomfortable for a long time. That's what I had to do.

The lack of income back in 2009 meant that I had missed a couple of payments on my boat. The engine had been giving me some trouble, so it was in storage for a long time. When I went to check on it, after six months, I noticed the tonneau cover on the back was folded over, and there was mildew everywhere. On closer inspection, I saw the inside of the boat was totally destroyed.

The barbed wire at the self-storage place had been cut, and someone had ripped out the padded wall panels, the stereo, the speakers and sub-woofer, and most of the fittings. They damaged the fiberglass as they had hacked away with screwdrivers.

It was a gorgeous boat – and had cost me \$70,000 new. I was waiting to earn enough to fix the engine – but now this!

At the time I didn't know any better, and expected to be able to re-negotiate with the bank to make up for the missed payments. The bank called me, and informed me that they were going to repossess the boat. It was their policy, and non-negotiable once you missed three payments.

By that time I had taken it to the dealership in Orlando, to get an estimate on the repairs. I couldn't afford it, and there wasn't much I could do. Even if I could make up the payments I had missed, there was no way I could keep the boat.

Sometime before a repo man with a tow truck had actually knocked on my dad's door, looking for the boat. I got his number, and made the arrangements to have the boat collected.

The company eventually filed a legal motion. They wanted \$25,000 for the loss of value to the boat. I thought it was bullshit, because the repairs were estimated at no more than \$10,000. I understood their position – they were obviously just going to auction the boat, and try to recoup the difference from me – then I would have to continue making the payments on a boat that I no longer owned.

It was a stressful time. I used to get collection calls from unlisted numbers all the time. Bill collectors were hounding me two or three times a day.

I still had lines of credit, and payments due from the business fiasco with Brian and Pedro. It was a significant amount of money, but I had figured I would negotiate settlements as soon as my business took off. The pressure was on, though – it was high time to start earning some real money.

Even though my business was growing, I realized it would take years to get my head above water, and pay off all the debts. I was 42 years old, by now, and it wasn't an encouraging prospect.

The attorney I had worked for at my second job in the construction industry, had closed his development company when the market tanked, and had started a new business helping people with the legalities of bankruptcy.

A lot of people were going bankrupt after 2008 – so it was a lucrative market. I got in touch with him to figure out what options were

available to me. The boat company had served me with Service of Process papers, and I had to go to a pre-trial hearing. There was a representative from the attorneys, and one from the bank.

“We want to know what all your assets are,” the attorney’s representative said.

“Well, I don’t really have any,” I replied, and we went through the ten minute process. After it was over, the representative said to me:

“See you again next year.”

I asked him to explain what he meant, and he told me that the legal process worked that way. Once a year the bank would take stock of your financial position, your assets and your bank balance, to see if it was worthwhile for them to come after your money or any assets of value you might have.

“There isn’t going to be a next year, asshole...” I was thinking to myself.

When you default on your credit, the bank will sell whatever they can to recoup their losses, even if they get 20 cents on the dollar, if they can’t work out a payment plan.

I wasn’t making enough money to negotiate a payment plan. I hadn’t even filed my personal tax returns since 2006. I was planning to sort all of that out, and submit everything once I got back on my feet.

All the funds I had recovered so far had gone to living expenses, paying off debt, and running the business. It was a struggle.

My car was ten years old, and paid off, but it was starting to give me problems. When I took it to the garage, they informed that it needed \$9,000 worth of repairs. There was no way I could afford it. Things were starting to break, and it wasn’t in a good enough condition to be sold. I went to a dealership to see what I could do about trading it in, instead. They offered \$20,000, because it still had relatively low

mileage, and so I traded it in, and took out a two-year lease on a Lincoln MKX. A lease doesn't really count as owning equity – because at the end of the day, it's a glorified rental.

Here's the reality: If you file for bankruptcy your possessions aren't at risk unless you have real equity.

Tony, my attorney, informed me that I was eligible to file for a 'Chapter 7' bankruptcy. My average income was low enough to fall into the stipulation. I could wipe out all of my debt. I knew it would take some time to start making money, and legally, nobody could touch my assets or my money because I simply didn't have much.

I had a clean slate, and I had never missed a payment on any mortgages or car payments – besides the boat that was repossessed.

The attorney's words were welcome news. I was being hounded day and night, and the collectors were blowing my phone up. It seemed like a way out of a sticky situation, so I decided it was a good idea to go through the process.

I had to disclose everything about my finances at the hearing, and the judge was satisfied with what I presented. My book wasn't selling too well yet, my car had been traded in, to get the lease, and I didn't really own anything. The formalities were completed, my tax returns were caught up, and it was all official. The debt collectors stopped calling, and in October 2012 it all went through and my bankruptcy was discharged.

Things continued to pick up slowly, and I started working on a second edition of my first book. Over all this time I had coached at least five hundred people, and had hundreds of emails coming in with every kind of question that needed to be answered every month. I had received a lot of feedback, and knew much more about what could be added to the book to make it even better than the first edition was.

I had used a ghostwriter to complete the book originally, but it made sense to do the additions and changes by myself. Explaining it to a ghostwriter would be a waste of time.

By January 2013 I was working hard on the new 2nd edition. In June of that year is when I moved back to Orlando.

Looking back over those four difficult years, I can't say that it was a walk in the park. I had to suffer through those experiences – but I was willing to do it because there was nothing else that I would rather be doing. I loved it. I loved being a coach, and helping people. I couldn't imagine doing anything else. I also got to spend a lot of time with my dad, aunt and uncle, which really solidified our family bonds.

Most people quit a new business before they get through this stage of development. They quit on the one-yard line, so to speak.

I simply refused to quit, because it was my calling. I was willing to suffer for it. I believed that my mission in life was to share my story, and my knowledge with other people, and to make a difference in the world. In other words – to take my life, and my story, and all the shit I had been through, all the challenges I had overcome, all the success I had in my career, working for other people, and share that with those who could learn from it. I got every job I ever went after. I worked for the largest and best construction company on the planet in the nineties. The real estate and mortgage company that I built was the biggest in the state of Florida. We were the biggest accounts with many of the mortgage lenders in the state.

It's a part of my nature – I always want the best, the biggest, and all the options, and all the bells and whistles. I could have gone back into the construction industry, and probably would have made a success of it – but this is what really brought me fulfillment. Because I loved what I was doing, even though I wasn't making a lot of money – it was worth it.

I had started working on the book in November 2005, and it wasn't until early 2010 before my business finally started growing.

“Patience with small details makes perfect a large work. Like the universe.”

~ Rumi

As I said before, making money is 80% psychology, and 20% mechanics. In this case, the mechanics were a real challenge to figure out, no doubt about it.

The psychology of it means sticking with the process, despite the challenges. Even when people tell you that you're unrealistic, that you need to give up, that it's taking too long, you stick to what you believe in, no matter what.

Frank's words still echoed in my mind:

“You've been holding on to this for three years! You need to give up! You're not realistic.”

But honestly, that's his story, not my story. I later heard from a friend that he is now working for a home improvement warehouse making \$12 an hour. There's nothing wrong with that – but keep in mind that while he was working for me in real estate he was making a six-figure income. He gave up on making his life a success, because that's the story that's in his head. He's the only one that can change it.

But it wasn't my story. In my mind, in my psychology – there *had to be a way*. Other people were selling books – there obviously must be a way to do it. I was going to figure it out, come hell or high water. I knew I had a great product – I believed in it, and everyone that I talked to learned something from me.

Even if you find only one good thing in my book – you’re better than you were before – you’ve expanded your horizons, and grown as a person.

Finding the ‘Blind-Spot’

It didn’t happen overnight, and I had to take a crappy job, working at a sports bar in order to survive – but I was on the one yard line, even though I didn’t realize it.

Looking back at it now, I can see that everything had been stripped away from me. I had tried all the options – and when there were no other options to try, I just had to go back to the beginning to see what I had overlooked, and what I had dismissed.

Back in 2008 an Internet marketer had advised me to create an email list, and an email newsletter to make my business go viral. I had dismissed that piece of wisdom, originally. I didn’t enjoy writing, and I didn’t want to write newsletters. I thought my book was good enough, and if people wanted to read, they could read that. So I ignored it, at first.

It’s called a scotoma – which is another way of saying a belief that is so strong that it creates a ‘blind spot.’

To illustrate what I mean, imagine the husband says to his wife:

“Honey, we don’t have any mustard!”

To which the wife replies: “Of course we do – it’s in the middle cupboard where it always is.”

“We’re totally out of mustard. I can’t believe we’re out of mustard!”

The wife comes over, and shows him the mustard, which had been right in front of him all the time – but some part of him wouldn’t allow him to see it.

Because your belief is so powerful, you create blind spots, and you can’t see what’s right in front of you.

I got that good advice back in 2008, and if I had listened to it at the time, I would have made progress a lot sooner. Instead, I refused to write.

I had created a kind of scotoma, and refused to acknowledge my blind spot. But as usual, pride comes before a fall. When you fall, you get back up again, and go on, and try again – and look for what you did wrong and should do differently.

Two and a half years later, after spending thousands of dollars, and trying just about everything else, I finally tried taking his advice – and it worked.

When it felt like everything had been stripped away, the blindness disappeared, and the arrogance dissolved. I started doing email newsletters, and blogging.

When you send email newsletters out, a percentage of the people on your list will click through to your website. Google registers the activity, and it helps them better tune the search results – and the free search traffic increases.

I had to *let go of the need to be right* – and all I needed was one more idea – one more permutation. That’s what I started doing.

“Nature hath given men one tongue but two ears, that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak.”

~ Epictetus

Business blogging

If you have a product or service – you need to find the right way to get to the kinds of people who can use it. That was one of the hardest things to learn in my Life Coaching business. Learning to adapt my traditional marketing expertise and experience, and translating it into marketing success on the Internet.

I do a lot of coaching with people who need this information, like entrepreneurs and business people, so I want to share a few important ideas here, to help those of you who are starting out on your own entrepreneurial endeavor, or who already have an established business you want to grow.

Most importantly, I had to completely change the way I thought about sales.

People on the Internet are looking for information – first and foremost. That is the nature of the Internet – and its reason for existence. The largest search engine in the world is Google, of course, and the second largest search engine in the world, the next place people go to find out *how to* do something is on YouTube.

If you are in the lawn service business, for example, if you love landscaping and gardening, and you have a green thumb – the best way to promote a business like that online would be with YouTube, Facebook or Instagram video clips. There are hundreds of things you can do to inspire and teach people.

Take your video camera and shoot short clips, and show tips on how to use an edger, or how to plan your flowerbeds. Show people how to install low voltage outdoor lighting. Talk about which plants to use in certain climates, when to plant annuals, what types of trees to plant, where to plant them in the yard so they don't damage the plumbing with their roots. Show people before and after pictures of the work you've done. Let the passion shine through.

If you love it, and have a passion for it – you should film it, write about it, and take pictures of it. Share it on SnapChat, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube – or whichever social media channel that works for you. There are more than enough options.

If you're going to run your business online, your own website is your home base, and central focus point. Using a third-party platform leaves you at the mercy of the administrators of that platform. If they decide that they don't like your language, or what you're talking about – they can bump you off and ban you from the platform. They may go out of business, or another platform or technology makes them obsolete.

That's a very real possibility. The way I've set it up is that the main place I want everyone to go is my own website. I look at the various social media channels, as another email list or platform for people to consume my content, as a wider net, funneling all that traffic towards one central point, my website.

As an online entrepreneur your biggest task is to create engaging content. You need to think of yourself as a content *Producer*.

You need to produce pictures, audio recordings, videos and articles on whatever it is that you're good at. People can see who you are, what you do, and what kind of a person you are. They get to know you, and trust you – and they start to follow you, and eventually buy what you're selling.

Whether you're offering advice, or selling a product – it's the best way to engage people's interest online. Once you're at that point you can start focusing your advertising – like an expert marksman.

You can run Facebook ads by zip code or area, or interest group. You can also use a tracking pixel you get from Facebook, similar to the Google Analytics tracking code I mentioned earlier, which allows Facebook to track all the activity of their users while they are on your website to better optimize your Facebook ads and show your ads to

other similar Facebook users, or to remarket or reach people on Facebook who have already visited your website, but haven't actually bought anything yet. For example, people who visited your checkout page but not your order confirmation page, or those who have been reading articles and watching videos on your website over the past 30 days.

You can also use the Facebook Pixel to find new customers who are similar to your website visitors by creating a *Lookalike Audience* once your pixel has tracked a minimum of 100 conversions. I have two audiences I run ads with: 1) Audience of Facebook users who have been on my website for the past thirty days and 2) Lookalike Audience-Facebook users who are similar to the Facebook users who have been on my website for the past thirty days.

Best of all, you can run these ads at a relatively low cost, if you're starting your business while you're still working. Even \$5 a day can get you started. You keep running those ads, and keep directing traffic to your web page, your book, product or to like your page so they can follow your future posts and maybe become a customer later. By carefully targeting your efforts, you can find just the right kind of people, and steadily grow your audience. People can subscribe to a newsletter, a Facebook fan page, Instagram page or a YouTube channel. They start consuming your content. That is why people in the industry say that advertising is an investment.

Say, for example, you're nuts about model train sets. Show videos of how you build your track and layout. Show people how you've laid out your tracks, wired and powered it, chose buildings and landscape, built tunnels, etc., and record the work in progress. Teach people how to arrange the switches, and what power supply to use. Show them how to use plaster of Paris to make the mountains and scenery, how to paint the buildings, the kind of landscaping you use, and where you buy your supplies. People get to see your passion, and how great it looks once you're done.

For my business, people follow me, make donations, click on ads on my website, they hire me, or buy my book. They happen to like what I say, or the way I talk. Others don't like me – or the way I talk, or the way I look – they're free to follow someone else. That's the beauty of the Internet – you have a global audience.

If you have a restaurant – why not create a blog? Interview customers at the table, and ask them about their meal. Make it interesting, and show off what you do well. Do an ad campaign to advertise your amazing lunch special.

The trick is to use the Internet to target exactly the right kinds of prospects that work for your business. The amount of people who subscribe to social media and the demographic and lifestyle data that social media has on its users is incredible – and so it is possible to build any small business up steadily over time that has a good product or service that people find value in.

If you're in real estate, as another example, you know that people want to buy or lease a property – or they want to find out what their property is worth, because they want to sell it. Your job is to make it easy for them to get exactly the right information. Buyers and those who want to lease property need listings to browse, and information. People who want to sell or who are thinking about selling want to know what their property is worth. Educate people by giving them the useful information that they need, and then ask for their business. Give them the info first, and then ask for the order. Make it easy and fast for them to get what they need, and make it enjoyable to use your service – and cut out all the risks for the end user by being the expert who has all the information and answers. Take a sincere interest in other people, especially your clients, and then serve their needs and solve their pain.

No matter what line of business you're in, whether you're an attorney, a real estate broker, or a business owner or entrepreneur – you have to understand how the Internet works, and how to market

your product or service. The Internet has completely leveled the playing field. Huge corporations and organizations, Hollywood and the media don't really have the monopoly on content on the Internet – nor can they. There's room for everyone.

Anything you want to learn about – whether it's foreign policy, nature, the government, life, how to, or science – there's someone out there already providing great information about the subject. People will tune in to hear your information, and watch your video to see how you do it.

Most of them won't buy from you – but that doesn't matter, because some of them will. If they follow you, and listen to you, they might come back in a couple of months. They will remember you, and when the need arises, you might just get a phone call or an email.

Keep giving great information, and keep creating great content – because remember – *Content is King*. All the huge entertainment labels, like Netflix, YouTube, HBO and all the big networks know that people want to hear, watch and read great *content*.

You can find your ideal audience, and build your business in a relatively short time on the Internet. You can zero in on just the right kinds of customers, and target your market with precision. The beauty of advertising on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Google or YouTube is that you can find the people who want what you have to advertise.

With my business I've found that sometimes people follow me for three years before buying anything from me. While some might buy straight away, that isn't always the case. Usually people will look around, and get a feel for what you're doing before making the decision to commit.

You want to develop your skills, and share your knowledge online. If you love to write, you should be on a platform like medium.com, sharing your thoughts and ideas and stories. You should have a

personal blog on blogger, or WordPress or elsewhere. All of my articles and videos on the website are shared via social media.

To use an illustration from the construction industry again: When you're constructing a large high-rise building, you need to spend some time designing the foundations properly, in order to be able to support the weight of the finished building. A high-rise building usually sits on lots of pilings. Concrete pilings are driven down into the bedrock. A cluster of pilings creates a piling cap, a square formwork is built around it with steel rebar, and then concrete is poured on top and hardens. The entire weight of the building is solidly supported and spread across dozens of similar pile-caps that make up the buildings foundation, transferring all the weight right down into the bedrock. If some of the pilings fail, the building doesn't necessarily come down because there are numerous points in the foundation of the building that can share the weight.

If you think of your website in terms of constructing a huge building – the same rules apply. You can't support your business on one 'piling.' You need a number of supports, which are solidly grounded, and can support you over the long term. Those individual supports are your podcasts, your email list, your Facebook fan page, your medium profile, your Instagram, your YouTube, your Snapchat, etc., – as many as you have content for. If one of them fails, your business won't come crashing down.

I heard from an internet marketer years ago, I think it was Perry Marshall, that a good way to think of your internet business, is to think of it in terms of building the first airplane. Most engineers were focused on building stronger engines, and heavy machinery. When the Wright brothers developed a flying machine, they looked at birds. Birds are light enough to glide through the air, they're not weighed down too much, and they're built for efficiency. They built the first flying machine like a glider – as light as they could – so it could fly without power like a bird glides, then later add the engines and the rest of aviation is history from there.

Think of your online business as a glider. You don't need to weigh it down with too much all at once – develop it gradually from the ground up, as your budget allows. The idea is to grow your audience by producing really great content that illustrates and demonstrates what you do, and that educates and informs them with valuable information they are interested in. Once the quality of your content is good enough that it grows your audience organically on its own, then add an advertising campaign, like the Wright Brothers did with adding engines to their glider once it flew on its own without engines.

You want it to grow organically on its own. When I started, I was writing, and then gradually moving onto YouTube. I wasn't spending anything on advertising at all. I noticed that traffic was increasing really slowly – but the increased traffic was basically free. The more content I created, the more the free search traffic and business grew. Fortunately, all the things I've learned are available to you, so you don't have to go back and reinvent the wheel – you can model what I do successfully in your own industry, taking out what works for you.

Once you build a personal website, and start producing content, the foundations are set. As you go along, you will notice that some of your content gets far more attention than the rest. It pays to use those popular articles, the ones with the most views, comments and likes – advertise them widely, and use their popularity to your advantage. You show people your best stuff when advertising. The beauty of the Internet is you get instant feedback, good and bad, on whatever you post. The stuff people like the most, will perform better when you advertise it, thereby costing less money to reach more people. Advertise smarter not harder.

The downside of building audiences on different platforms, is that it isn't completely under your control. There is always a risk that the platform will close you down, or change its policies, and damage your business.

Always keep your website secure, as your home base, your Alamo, and back it up regularly offline on physical drives. When you're hosting your own site, it's your responsibility to keep a safe copy of it and your email list offline. Every week I back up my website offline, even though it's backed up online everyday automatically, because you never know. I keep my video clips on a hard-copy backup too, even though YouTube backs them up on two separate servers.

Technology is moving so quickly that platforms can go out of business at any time. Nobody really remembers things like Netscape or MySpace anymore. Today Facebook is popular – tomorrow it might not be.

People want great information – so concentrate on that. The sales come afterwards, and it's secondary. I'm constantly giving stuff away to people for free, with no risk to them. Whether it's a digital version of the book, or some other content – I always have free information for people. Spread your eggs into as many baskets as you can.

“The first man gets the oyster, the second man gets the shell.”

~ Andrew Carnegie

Speaking My Mind

I went back to Orlando to get Network Chiropractic treatments from my doctor there, and while I stayed there, I went to visit James, my ex-partner, who was still in contact with me. We were still friends, even after everything that had happened.

James was making music, and had written some songs, and set up a studio at his home. We got to talking, and I offered to promote his music on my YouTube channel. Some of his songs were about overcoming challenges, struggling, and enduring, and I thought my 15-20,000 subscribers that I had at the time might enjoy some of it. At the same time, it might help him sell a few CD's or get a gig.

I offered to film him, using my gear, and to share the videos – thinking that it might help. He thought it was a good idea too, so we started filming.

I've always spoken my mind, and I come from a blue-collar background. I'm liberal with the "F-bombs" – and I just say what's on my mind, no matter who you are. It's something I got from my mother – who was always very straightforward. She would cut you right down to size, and tell you when you were full of shit.

I don't feel the need to be 'politically correct' – and I'm not afraid to speak my mind. After everything I've been through, and after the experiences I've had in my life, I'm simply not ashamed of being myself – I embrace the person that I am. My articles are always straightforward, and tell things the way they are.

It was also one of the things I enjoyed about going to the Tony Robbins events and seminars. Most people see only one side of him, because he has one style when he is in the public eye – but when you go to an event, the gloves come off, and he reveals his blue-collar background, and he isn't afraid to say, "fuck," – repeatedly if necessary.

James, on the other hand, felt differently about it. He was a cancer survivor, and had one of his kidneys removed. We used to smoke a joint together from time to time, and we talked the same way when we were together. Around his family, and members of his church, though, he never revealed that side of his nature. He kept it carefully hidden.

So I recorded the video for him, and in between the songs we were talking in the usual way, and the “f-bombs” were being dropped all over.

I uploaded it, and sent him the link, and he posted it on social media. Several of his very religious, conservative and politically correct friends watched it, and all hell broke loose. Those “f-bombs” really offended them. They thought it was inappropriate.

James really cared what other people thought – and so a couple of months later, when we were hanging out, having a few beers, smoking a joint he said to me:

“Man – I don’t know how to say it, so I’m just gonna come right out and say it. You need to clean up your act. I showed that video to a couple of people, friends and family of mine, and they were really upset and appalled at your language.”

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. Then, as if it was already settled, he continued:

“We should go into business together,” he said, “we could make a lot of money together, if you could just clean up your act. You know, I just assumed you were going to edit out all those words. You can’t talk that way.”

I just listened to him in disbelief.

“James,” I said, “I love you like a brother – and we’ve been through a lot together. But you haven’t lived my life, and you’re not me. I

didn't see you on my dad's couch, living like a broke college student. I didn't see you invest a penny in my new business. You didn't invest much in the retail mortgage and real estate business either when you were my business partner before – and now you want to go into business together and call all the shots?”

Basically, what it came down to, was that James wanted to step into my business, and get me to help him grow his music career, while he appointed himself as my censor, and told me what I could and couldn't say on YouTube.

If people don't like what I have to say, the way I talk, or how I say things – they're welcome to follow someone else. Not everyone is meant to be your client, your friend or your lover. Not everyone will like your music – and that's perfectly okay. I want to work with people who accept me and appreciate me as I am. If people don't like it, I don't give a damn. I don't answer to them or anyone else.

It didn't sit well with him, but at this point in my life I was very comfortable with who I was. I was comfortable in my own skin. I had grown to love the kind of person I was. I loved my time alone, and I loved the time I spent with the people I cared the most about.

I was beyond being bullied – and beyond being stuck under anyone else's thumb, as it had been when we worked together.

There was no way in hell I would give away half of this business, and have someone else control me. I offered to take the video down, and make it completely private. I had simply been trying to help.

I remember dropping him off after dinner, and thinking – this is probably the last time we'll ever see each other again.

The First Signs of Success

“Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value.” ~ Albert Einstein

By mid 2013 I was making between \$4,000 and \$6,000 a month, and learning a lot about how to boost traffic to my website, increase subscriptions, and grow my business.

At one point back in 2012, I stopped blogging, and was doing up to six YouTube videos a day. Some were only a couple of minutes long, but I was answering most of my subscriber’s questions, and best of all, as I did more videos, I got more subscribers. I was doing 24 YouTube videos a week for about six months in 2012.

It really jump-started my business.

My audience had gotten big enough to exceed a certain critical mass, and things were growing very steadily. At one point I was getting almost a thousand new followers a month. Each video title was another opportunity to be discovered on search engines and YouTube, and that meant more clicks, and more page views on my site.

The two biggest search portals on the net are Google and YouTube – and I was covering both of those bases.

The same year I got a web engineer to migrate my site from GoDaddy.com, to a new cloud server architecture on Amazon Web Services (AWS). I had been reading a lot on *Business Insider*, of all places, about the subject. It’s good to know the web landscape, and the technology on the horizon if you’re thinking of becoming an online entrepreneur because it’s always changing.

What happens is that when your web-server gets a lot of traffic, it makes your site load slower when you are on the same server with other websites. Video, audio and image files that are large tend to slow everything down. The way the Internet infrastructure is put together, across the globe, it makes a huge difference where your site is hosted.

I learned about Amazon's cloud server, which was the most successful retail server in the world. I got my web engineer to upload my site to their Content Delivery Network (CDN). Amazon's main server in Virginia has a network of server farms all over the world, and the traffic is managed efficiently, by determining the closest server to the client. Changing to a dedicated cloud server on Amazon had a huge positive impact on my web traffic. It cost quite a bit more than what I had before, but it was well worth it.

AWS was the fastest web architecture available, and it basically quadrupled my free search traffic from one day to the next when I made the switch.

Speed matters. Google's bot crawls your site, and if it determines that your site doesn't load very quickly, your rankings decrease. In other words, when people search for terms and keywords related to your subject, you appear further down in the list of search results. It's based on the logic that if a website doesn't load within seconds, people tend to close it.

I was creating a video, grabbing the video embed code from YouTube and putting it on my site, along with an article with the same title. Then I would add a paragraph or two explaining what the video's content was aimed at. That way Google's bot would know what it was all about, index all that data into their computer network – and the end result was lots of new traffic.

I was still selling the original paperback book, as well as the digital version of book, and then I also later added an audio book to the mix.

In fact, after a while I was stunned at how many audio books were selling – several thousand every month. It was a significant additional income stream. I had no idea audio books were so popular.

I also turned on Google AdSense on my YouTube videos. It's a great symbiotic relationship – AdSense gets revenue from their advertising during your video, and YouTube Red revenue, so you're worth more to them, and at the same time your traffic increases too. By allowing YouTube to show ads, my new YouTube subscription figures quadrupled.

These simple, common-sense things all make a huge difference. Sometimes it's not about reinventing the wheel – it's just a matter of finding, and then consistently following the proper procedures.

My book sales went up, my subscription list grew, and things finally started working. Inch by inch, millimeter by millimeter, and one loyal subscriber at a time, I was finally getting to where I wanted to be. It was trial and error, and it took a really long time, but it worked in the end.

I packed all my things into my car, and headed back to Orlando, where I leased a small condo.

By 2014 things kept improving, and I could afford to move to a better place. The agent who was organizing it for me actually made a mistake, and had to let me out of the lease agreement, but I got an even better place – one of the nicest units in downtown Orlando. I still have that property today, even though I don't spend a lot of time up there much anymore.

Finally, four or five years after starting, I was reaching my goals in terms of income, and starting to live the life I wanted again. As a bonus, I was able to set up a room with soundproofing, and invest in some great equipment for recording videos and audio.

I released the second edition of the book in 2013, and my coaching sessions were really taking off too. I also started offering an email coaching service to those that couldn't afford the phone sessions.

At one stage it got so busy that it all became too much to manage. There are only so many hours in a week, and I was running myself ragged for a while.

It can be really draining spending hours coaching people, because I put so much into it, talking for hours at a time. You put your heart and soul into an hour's session, and as soon as you're done, the next one starts. It keeps you on your toes, to say the least.

Each time I got too busy, and there was too much demand, I would raise my rates a little. Business would drop off, and then slowly climb back up again, and I could raise the prices again.

The idea is to work smarter, not harder, after all.

“Excellence is not a singular act but a habit. You are what you do repeatedly”

~ Aristotle

Expansion

During 2014 this settled into the pattern that I would follow, day in, and day out. Every day, I kept trying to add value to the website, and to people's lives.

As I got busier, and took on more clients, it was time to hire some staff to help me cope with the growth. To my web developers and freelancers I added a Personal Assistant, who also works as an office manager. The people I hire are all very good at what they do – and they love what they do – otherwise I wouldn't hire them.

My Personal Assistant has been a close friend of mine for almost 25 years. She's one of the few people that I've met in life with a similar spiritual outlook to my own. She's a very creative person, and very detail-oriented, with an eye for beauty, and she's really good at handling my social media. She does a beautiful job researching, designing, fact checking and posting all of my Instagram quotes. It has allowed me to delegate a lot of what needs to be done, so I can focus on my core competencies.

By the way, you should go to my Instagram page right now and follow me @CoachCoreyWayne where we post several success, philosophy, relationship and mindset quotes written by myself and those written by the wisest leaders and teachers from the past and present. We post several new quotes every week.

It's interesting how things have come full-circle. Back when I had the big real estate company, there were plenty of people to take care of the more mundane things. I had a full time IT guy, who took care of the corporate website, and any computer problems we had in the office.

When I started over, I had to learn all those things on my own. I could only manage a really basic website – I simply didn't have a choice.

When your income doesn't allow for hiring staff, you have to become the master of a few different trades that you might not enjoy. It's great that I've been able to hire people again, so I can focus on what I enjoy. On the plus side, by now I also have a good enough understanding of web development to discuss all the details with the developer – but I'm glad I don't have to do the actual work myself.

When you go through conflict and difficult times, it makes you appreciate the help that you have. I constantly remind myself of the good things I have now, and I'm grateful for them.

Those struggles help you to grow as a person – and when you've persevered, gone through the fire, and come out the other end, it makes you appreciate the good times. It builds endurance – and a certain stick-to-itiveness – something which most people won't do.

Once you accept your flaws – nobody can use them against you. It's only when you're embarrassed, and feel bad about your flaws, that others can use them against you.

It's helped me a lot in life, getting to understand these things. I'm not the most successful person in the world, and I'm certainly not the smartest person in the world, but I'm more successful than the average person is. I look at the world in a way that most people don't because I've dedicated my life to learning, applying what I learn and growing as a person. When I come up against something I don't understand, or that I haven't mastered, I obsess over it, and find out about it until I do understand it, or I find someone who can teach me.

Accept your flaws – and nobody can use them against you.

Most of my clients came to me because of a difficulty they are experiencing in life. Very often it's a relationship or quality of life problem that has been growing for some time. When there's a breakup, or things go sideways – they reach out to me trying to get an ex back. Someone was dating a girl, and she blew him off or dumped him, or friend-zoned him – so he comes to me. A husband has a

difficult relationship with his wife, they're in marriage counseling already, she doesn't want to sleep with him anymore, and she's talking about divorce. He wants to save his marriage – so he comes to me.

People ask me – “How can you help people who have been married for years, if you're not in a marriage right now yourself?”

I'm able to help these people, because for many years of my life, I struggled with relationships. I wasn't able to attract or keep the kind of woman I really wanted. I always felt like I was settling or something was missing and couldn't keep the women I really wanted in my life. I got married in my mid-twenties, not because I really wanted to, but because of the pressure of the situation. I actually felt that I should move on, somewhere deep inside, but I was also terrified that I would lose what I had. I feared that I wouldn't find anyone better.

She was the first long-term relationship I had with a wonderful woman that loved me for me. Every girl before that, at least the ones I really wanted, that knocked my socks off, had lasted only for a few dates before I got friend-zoned. What makes me qualified to help people in those situations is what I learned since then.

I learned how to stop turning off the women that I liked, and who liked me. Most guys talk women right out of liking, dating and sleeping with them because they don't know how to create or maintain romantic attraction.

I've always been a dreamer and a romantic, and believed in love at first sight. Ever since I was a kid, I've believed that there is a divine spark in everyone, and each of us has a purpose here, and there's a reason for every meeting. I don't believe in blind chance, or luck. Friends, lovers, clients, etc., are all people you are destined to meet. There are no accidents.

I believe our lives proceed out of our intentions for life. I believe we are divine beings having a human experience. I've had enough experiences in my life, and I've seen enough synchronicity in my life line up, and I've had enough wonderful relationships with really high-quality women, the kinds that I could never get when I was younger, to understand the subject thoroughly.

When a guy phones me with a marriage he wants to save, and he's already in couple's therapy, and yet his wife still doesn't want to sleep with him, or touch him physically – I know what he needs to focus on so he can re-attract her and rekindle the romance by becoming a more attractive man. Getting him to refocus on being the guy he was when she first fell in love with him. I ask what their outcomes are and then ask questions that lead to the heart of the problem, limiting beliefs and getting him to focus on his masculine core and purpose so he can re-attract her naturally. The reality is that what you do to get a woman to fall in love with you is what you do to keep her in love with you. 99.99% of the guys in long-term relationships who come to me with relationship problems, have stopped dating and courting their women properly.

He will tell me about what he and she are both doing and saying – I can read between the lines and point out the right attitude, mindset and actions that will create attraction, and stop turning her off. I understand what creates attraction. I understand what causes a feminine woman to be attracted to a masculine man, and how to exhibit those behaviors, because at one point in my life, I needed to learn those things. I've gone through the fire and made all the mistakes that led to rejection and undesirable results. I was constantly screwing up and turning women off who were initially really into me – until I learned what to do.

It's easier for a guy to do the right things when he's not that into the girl. When he really cares about someone, he fears losing her. He tries to compensate by doing too much, by trying to force things and he literally chases her right out of his life. I help him find the balance

between pursuing too much and not enough so she mostly pursues him instead.

Men think logically about things – and they need to project self-assurance and confidence. It is not masculine to doubt oneself, and acting from a place of need, lack, weakness and fear has disastrous consequences. It causes what you fear most, getting dumped or rejected, to actually happen because you make it happen.

People ask me: Will I ever get married again? That's not my intended outcome anymore. At the end of the day, getting married is something that religion and society teaches us to want, it's a legal agreement. Why get the government involved in your romance if you don't have to? At 47 years old, I've been a serial monogamist my whole life, and that is my truth. It's my personal path and journey. It's who I am. My intended outcome is to have great relationships, however long they last and enjoy my life. I'm not interested in living my life according to the expectations of others. Don't compare yourself and what you want to me or anyone else. Do what makes you happy. If you try to please others you will only make yourself miserable. You must define what qualifies as success and live that truth. Nobody can place limits on what you are capable of without your consent.

I have some deeply religious people come to me, who believe in the sanctity of marriage. "No sex until marriage." That's great – if that's the way you feel. But they are not the only ones out there.

I coach straight men and women, bisexual women, gay guys, lesbians, and people who are into both men and women. It's an honor to be of service to others. I can help others because I was able to help myself first and get consistent repeatable results. We're all divine beings having a human experience. We're all part of the same energy. The soul is not gender specific. Love is freedom, acceptance and allowing.

You've got to know yourself first, before you can teach anything in life.

“Gnothi Seauton” Know Thyself

~ Socrates

I get tons of comments online, asking me when I'm going to settle down and raise a family. In my mind, however, I've checked that box already.

Anybody who has read my first book knows that one of my girlfriends had a five-and-a-half-year-old daughter when we met, and started dating. I had the honor of being a father figure to her when she was very young, and into her teenage years. We're still in each other's lives, now that she's in her twenties, and we still keep in touch.

It's a really cool relationship. Her mother has remarried, and had more kids, but I love her as much today as I did all those years ago, when I was dating her mother – she's part of the family. Maybe someday I will have kids of my own, but it's not my focus – I just want to enjoy my life.

The only reason I got married in my twenties is because that's what everybody told me I had to want. Everybody tells you to do it, and you just follow the herd. Most people have a herd mentality in life, and they're unwilling to think for themselves.

There's no point comparing yourself to others. I'm no better than you or anyone else, but I have wisdom and life experience that people can learn from, and get predictable repeatable results.

All you have to do is look at the reviews that people post about my work, or look at the comments on my YouTube channel @CoachCoreyWayne. People have told me how they've learned from my mistakes, and from my successes.

That's one of the reasons why I have no problem talking about the difficult things I've been through. Some of those events were horrible, but they've shaped the kind of man that I have become. They're worthwhile, from that point of view. I've transcended them, and it made me want to help other people.

"Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring. Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips."

~ Proverbs 27:1-2

The more you start to live your own truth, and go and do things in a way that's pleasing to you – the better your life will be. We live in a society that tries to force us to conform. We're supposed to fit in a box – but the reality is that we're all different.

Take Leonardo DiCaprio, for example. People love to speculate about whether or not he will ever marry – but it doesn't bother him, or pressure him into making a mistake. Dating one gorgeous super model after the next, he's a serial monogamist too. He told the media:

"That time will come when that time comes. The truth is, you can't predict marriage. You can't plan it. It's just going to happen when it happens. I'm just gonna let it happen naturally." (Koerner, 2016)

I don't see the downside to Leo dating the series of amazing women he's experienced throughout his life. Every relationship is a gift, an opportunity to get better and enjoy your life.

George Clooney was the same way – he got married early on, it didn't work out, and it took him many years to settle down. Does that mean we need to aspire to be like George Clooney – or anyone else, for that matter? It doesn't make sense. Each of us is unique – and we all have our own path to follow as we learn.

The divorce rates have skyrocketed in the last few decades. Estimates range between 40% and 65% of all new marriages ending in divorce. It seems as if the majority of marriages are not working out, either because people made the wrong choice of partner, or because marriage is not what they really want in the first place. They're just kind of going along, trying to make it work somehow. As if marriage is a real life game of "Survivor" to see who can suffer and stay in it the longest.

If the quantity of years a couple is together is long, but the quality of those years sucked ass, I don't see how that's supposed to be a victory or a standard we should all aspire to. It's better to be alone than in bad company as the old adage goes, makes more common sense than purposefully making yourself miserable and shortening your life span unnecessarily.

I've seen the same pattern repeated over and over, with both men and women. People settle, and give up. They settle on their dead-end jobs, their careers or business partners that they can't stand – just because it earns a living. They settle, and give up on their personal lives and - and on their friends in life.

People forget that everything is temporary – and there's no reason to get stuck, or to give up.

I recently got the news that a college buddy of mine passed away in his sleep at 47. We used to go out together and drink too much, back in college. He was a good-looking guy, and the girls liked him a lot. He was funny as hell, always smiling and laughing. We stayed in contact, even though we didn't see each other too much – but I was sad to get the news. We hung out all the time and worked together when we were young, and he was a best friend with my roommate too.

The truth dawns on each of us, as we get older, and start losing people that we've loved and admired along the way. The reality is that everything in this life is temporary.

"Nothing endures but change."

~ Heraclitus, 6th Century B.C.

Everybody you love, and everything you build in life is going to turn to dust, eventually. The only constant in life is change, so you might as well accept that whatever has happened to you, or whatever didn't work out – it was supposed to be exactly that way. It couldn't have happened any other way.

All of this has made me realize that my path is my path, and it's different from everyone else's path. I live my life the way I want to, no matter what opinions people have – either for or against my choices.

I don't care if you think I'm an absolute jackass, and if you don't like the way I look, or the way I talk, or the way I choose to live my life, or the kinds of relationships I have. I'm the one who has to live with it – so I choose what I enjoy, and that's why I'm a serial monogamist. I plan to continue enjoying my life. If that means relationships that last from six months to two years or more – what does it really matter?

As Gerald Celente of the Trends Research Institute says, "current events form future trends." (Celente, 2011)

It's a tremendously liberating way to live – without the pressure to conform to some imagined set of rules. Live and let live – stop worrying about how everybody else is supposed to be living their lives – live your own life instead. If you get up each day, proud of the way your life is turning out, what you've accomplished, and where your own state of personal development is at – that's all that really matters.

Each of us has to set our very own standards about what success means. If you're constantly trying to live your life to other people's expectations, you're always going to disappoint someone.

I have aimed to set my life up as if every day is like a vacation.

Sitting where I'm working now, I am looking out over the beauty of my surroundings. The gorgeous blue-green ocean is pretty calm, and there are thousands of people on the beach. What do I have to complain about? While millions of people in different parts of the world are suffering, I'm sitting comfortably in an air-conditioned room, doing what I love – writing this book. I'm grateful for the way things are in my life.

I've had to go through an incredibly difficult journey to get here, and it's all turned out ok, simply because I got up each day, and kept grinding on. I kept my vision for the future in mind, and I moved forward, and took action, even when I didn't feel like it.

For example, before I sat down to write, I had to take some time out to get my mindset right. It took me an hour before I could sit down and work. I had some frustrations caused by an advertising campaign that wasn't working out, so I wanted to get that out of my head, and relax. A few minutes into the work, and I'm even more excited than I was before, and the work is flowing.

Even imperfect action is better than no action at all. As soon as you get busy, and start doing what you need to do, right now – you tend to feel better. It brings you right back to the present moment. You automatically forget about the future, and about what may, or may not work out.

“Find the Work of your Life, and the Worker too, for both exist as one – this is you... and joy will come.”

~ Rumi

Self-Reliance, Freedom, and Individuality

“Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you.” ~ Lao Tzu

I think the title of Victor Frankl’s famous book, *Mans Search for Meaning* really summarizes it all for me. In a way, that’s what we’re all constantly doing – looking for meaning in our lives.

We all have these questions: Why am I here? Where did I come from? Where was I before this life, and where do I go when it’s over? Most importantly: Who am I?

In search of my own answer, one that made sense to me, I looked into the various religions and philosophies, and spiritual traditions. I pondered the questions and answers found in Buddhism, and in the Bhagavad Gita, the Hindu Holy book, Dr. Wayne Dyer, Zen, The Tao, Deepak Chopra, Edgar Cayce’s readings, Neale Donald Walsch, the Koran, and of course, the Bible – I was raised Catholic after all.

In high school I remember asking the nuns and priests all these questions that I was curious about, and their answers always sounded the same: “We don’t really know.”

That wasn’t good enough for me – I wanted an answer that gave me peace – and I kept searching.

I’ve come to that place in my life, at long last, after everything that I’ve learned. For me, those questions have been answered in a way

that does bring me peace. It's a question of looking at it from a timeless perspective – from the point of view of the soul.

We're all divine beings, living a human experience.

Edgar Cayce once said in a reading that when people finish their earthly life, and move on to the next realm of existence, a certain amount of time is necessary to rebalance their essence.

The soul is not gender specific – so in one life you're a man, and in the next you might be a woman. It is normal, for example, to live your life as a man, and then complete one cycle, and reincarnate as a woman in the next. If the soul reincarnates too quickly, it might carry over some of the gender essence from the previous life – and that results in men being more feminine, or women being more masculine. Very often such people are attracted to others of the same sex.

If you look at things from an eternal perspective, it begins to make more sense. If, instead, you only take your one life into consideration – things don't always seem to make logical sense.

The story I shared about Carla Larson, and her husband, illustrated this idea. Why did her husband have to go through two separate brutal murders, of people that he loved and cared about, in one lifetime? It's horrible – and it doesn't make sense, unless you look at it from the proper perspective.

If you think of human beings as mere mindless “meat sacks” – as a friend of mine who is a retired Marine likes to say – it makes no rational sense at all. Why doesn't God intervene, and stop all this evil from happening?

If you think of yourself as an eternal spiritual being, which has come into this life to gain a certain set of experiences, good and bad – then it can begin to make sense. If the laws of Karma extend beyond this

lifetime, then it makes sense why people have to experience pain and intense emotions in life.

I had a friend who was a very successful video director. He lost his daughter when she was really young, and it tormented him for years afterwards.

One night he had a very strange experience. He got a message from his daughter in a dream. She had explained to him that the two of them had, in fact, agreed to live through that difficult experience before they both incarnated. It was supposed to happen exactly the way it did, so that he could experience the depth of his emotions. When he woke up, he experienced a deep sense of peace – something that had been lacking from his life up until that point.

My brother related another “bizarre” experience about the death of our own mother. It was sometime between her time of death, and the time that her body was discovered – that she appeared to him in a dream. She said that everything was alright, and that she was better now. She told him about a sister that needed to be looked after.

At first he dismissed it as just a silly dream, but when he had to go to the house, after we had learned of my mother’s passing, he noticed the dog that was left behind. It was a female. Was this the “sister” he was supposed to look after? The thought just struck him.

If you believe that something like that is possible, and look at it from the perspective of an eternal soul, it makes sense. If you refuse to accept it, it’s just nonsense.

From a spiritual perspective, to me, those things make a lot of sense. I believe we choose our own parents. Edgar Cayce explained that people incarnate in groups of souls – in one life you’re the parent, and in another you’re the child, or a brother or sister. If you hurt or cheat on someone in one lifetime, you have to go back and work out those issues in a subsequent incarnation, and heal them with love, so our essence can balance.

I don't look at people as being part of a particular race, or gender. We're all part of the same energy – and the form we take in this life is of secondary importance. The body you have is perfect for the experience you're supposed to go through. Your soul enters a body around the time of birth – and you go through exactly what you're meant to – exactly what was intended before incarnation.

To me, self-reliance means accepting that your life is exactly what it's meant to be. Every spiritual tradition shows that we're only a facet of the Divine, created in the likeness of God. That means we all have the ability to help ourselves.

“Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.”

~ Henry Thomas Buckle

We tend to be impatient, though. We want everything now – instantly. The laws of nature, and the cosmos, however, work at their own rates, and on their own sweet time. Life doesn't move at the speed of your thoughts. The sun comes up slowly, travels across the sky, and sets at the proper time. The rose grows on the bush, and at exactly the right moment, it blooms. Then it fades away again.

Thoughts don't become reality in an instant. If it happened that way, every time you imagined something bad happening to you, it would happen immediately.

Life tends to work through a process – First you create intentions in your mind. It has to be something emotionally compelling, and then you actually have to take actions in line with your thinking and heart's desire. You gradually turn your habitual thoughts into your reality, sometimes over years, or even decades, by taking consistent action in line with your desires and goals. That shows the universe that you're serious about what you want, and if you keep repeating it, and holding on to it – it eventually manifests in reality. What you think about and take action upon becomes real.

Eventually, with enough time and repetition, what you want out of life comes to you.

My businesses never became successful instantly. I didn't get what I wanted by just snapping my fingers. It took a number of years, plenty of setbacks and hardships, and a lot of ups and downs.

Many – if not most - people who are successful today have had times in life where everything went wrong, and they lost everything. They had to start over again. I've been through those phases – where I've had a great lifestyle, and lost it all. When my heart called me in new directions, I followed.

It happened to Ray Dalio. As he mentions in his new book, “Principles: Life and Work,” in 1982 he was at the pinnacle of success in the financial world. He even testified to Congress that the market was going to get worse based upon his projections. They asked him to testify because of his previous track record of market success when they were trying to figure out future economic policy. The market did the opposite of what he predicted it would do. He and his firm failed miserably in front of the whole world. He and his investors lost a lot of money. The investors then withdrew their money from his firm. Even his business partner had to leave the firm and go do something else. Then he was the only employee left.

He became obsessed with figuring out and understanding why he was so wrong. He figured it out, filled in his knowledge gap and today the firm he started, Bridgewater Capital, is the largest and most successful hedge fund in the world. Ray is in the top 100 of Forbes richest people in the world.

Any painful circumstance that you have to endure in life is like a call to attention. Life is pointing out something that you need to learn. Anything that no longer serves you in life – whether it's a relationship that must end, a friendship that no longer serves you, or a job that runs its course – all these difficult changes need to be

understood in that light. Pain is life's way of telling you that you're doing something wrong – you're stuck, and you need to grow past it before the pain goes away. The more you ignore the pain, or try to suck it up – the more life brings it up in front of you to deal with. It's only when you consciously face up to the truth that you can overcome those things.

Looking at my own path from that perspective reveals a lot to me. When the time came to decide whether to stay in real estate, or to move on with something new – the circumstances of my life showed me what to do – painful as it was.

I could have continued with the real estate business, holding onto a dream that was over. My heart was pulling me elsewhere, but I could have stayed on, stubbornly building that billion-dollar real estate empire. I would have kept my properties, and continued doing mortgage loans. When the market crashed, I would have been trying to liquidate property in the middle of the biggest market bust, and the worst recession in decades. I would have lost a lot more than I did. My equity would have been wiped out. As it turned out, that money became the seed money for my new business, and allowed me to start afresh. I was able to experiment, and turn it into the thriving life-coaching practice that I have today.

Because I had grown enough, by that point in my life, to trust my heart, my intuition, and my curiosity about what felt right – I was able to make the change. Once I was able to be completely honest with myself, I realized that I had to do something else with my life – something meaningful, and something that helped other people.

As soon as I made that choice, it was amazing – the house sold three months before the residential market started to crumble, and the office building sold a year later, just before the commercial property market followed suit. It felt like that same energy protecting me that had been with me since that day in the tree as a kid – when I could have fallen badly, but didn't.

It wasn't a matter of being able to foretell the future – because like most people I had no idea of what was coming. I didn't understand the banking system that well yet, so I was just following my intuition of what felt right for me.

Freedom, and Self-Rule

The thing I love about the constitution of the United States is the premise that we're entitled to life, to liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – as is fit for all divine beings. Our freedom isn't granted by man or the state – it is assumed that it is an inborn right – the will of the Creator. The Declaration of Independence states this.

The US constitution assumes that freedom comes from the Creator – it's unalienable, innate, and cannot be separated from you. It's the Lord's will that you're in this life, and that you're here. It is presupposed that you're a free, divine being here because the Creator wills it. You're entitled to own property, and to the fruits of your labor. Stable property rights come from this idea. You own your body, your mind, your soul and your spirit. The constitution, in a sense is merely the written, legal evidence of this fact.

That's why I've always been more conservative, libertarian, and a constitutionalist. I don't like other people telling me how to live my life, and how to spend my money or how much of it I can keep. We all owe certain things to society – like taxes for example, but beyond our social responsibility, we are free to pursue our own will.

“Liberty is not a means to a political end. It is itself the highest political end.”

~ Lord Acton

I see two kinds of people on the planet:

One kind of person believes that people are free, and responsible enough to govern themselves. They are self-reliant, and so they believe that people should be left alone to figure it out for themselves.

The other half of the population believes in control. They think that people should be governed by systems and policies, and that the average person on this planet isn't competent, smart, or self-reliant enough to manage things for themselves. They believe that leadership is the duty of an elite class – who need to spoon-feed and control the masses.

There's an interesting dichotomy at work with people who have this kind of Marxist, Socialist or Communist outlook on things. They're usually very suspicious of the government – believing it to be corrupt, and misguided. At the same time, the policies that they're calling for are designed to give even more power to a central government.

“Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.”

~ Benjamin Franklin

When you study the history of mankind over the last few thousand years, the evidence shows one thing:

When you concentrate all the power in government, it leads to tyranny, incompetence, and mass murder. When you distribute that power from government down through to the people – it results in a much more stable form of society.

“If the power is not given to the Federal Government in the constitution, it is automatically assumed to be reserved for the State.”

The founding fathers of the United States were not ignorant of these facts. They knew what had happened in Rome, for example, when the Roman Empire collapsed from within. They saw a better way to run things based upon the mistakes of the past and with the Monarchy.

The freedom of the individual is supreme – and that means we're not allowed to infringe on anyone else's right to liberty, life, and the pursuit of happiness.

“The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs or impede their efforts to obtain it.”

~ John Stuart Mill

We are a government of the people, by the people and for the people. This means that in order for things to work properly, people have got to care about their communities, about who is running for office and why. We need to think about fixing things for ourselves instead of perpetually electing the same corrupt and incompetent people who push an agenda instead of fixing or addressing our problems.

Our society requires our participation. We must participate in our own rescue instead of remaining deluded, thinking that incompetent politicians will save us. Do you even know the names of your members of congress who represent you? Do you even know the name of your mayor, city manager, or the governor of your state, etc.?

The reality is that most people don't know the answers to those questions – and yet we get mad when the idiots that we elect, or that get elected because we don't participate in politics and vote, don't do a good job. We don't even know the names of our leaders.

Our success in the West has made us lazy and soft as a nation. We don't pay attention and we don't give a fuck. It's somebody else's job to fix things. We have become too used to expecting other people to run shit properly. We have forgotten what we were about as a pioneering country and what our national goals and values are.

“Hard times create strong men. Strong men create good times. Good times create weak men. Weak men create hard times.”

~ Stefan Molyneux

We've become too politically correct. We've had it so good for so long that we don't pay attention to what people are doing and we don't give a fuck. It's somebody else's job to fix things. We've just become too used to expecting other people to run the ship properly.

The way the US Constitution is written, the US is basically a democratic constitutional Republic of 50 individual countries. I live in the "country" of Florida, for example. Each State has a Governor – which is like the 'President' of the State. We have our own State Legislature, which is like the Congress - it's the Federal Government in miniature form. The State's governing system rules the State, while the central government was intended to take care of issues that affect the entire group of States in their relationships with other countries.

"I believe the States can best govern our home concerns, and the General Government our foreign ones. I wish, therefore... never to see all offices transferred to Washington, where, further withdrawn from the eyes of the people, they may more secretly be bought and sold at market."

~ Thomas Jefferson

Most of the people who choose a career in politics, or in the government, tend to be control freaks and busybodies who feel completely out of control in their own lives. The only way they feel good about themselves is by controlling others. It gives them structure and a purpose. They believe that the elite should rule the world – and where has that gotten us?

"Politics should be the part-time profession of every citizen."

~ Dwight Eisenhower

The rise of the European Union illustrates how this kind of thinking plays out on the international stage – and what it leads to.

During the early 1970's David Rockefeller and Zbigniew Brzezinski hatched a long-term plan for a centrally controlled world government, and started setting up the ideologies and methods to unify the world into one New World Order, starting with the intellectual and idealistic ideas of the Trilateral Solution.

“Brzezinski warned of a looming "serious crisis", as rapid technological change in the First World - which was creating a global "technetronic society" - widened the economic gap between it and the Third World. To prevent this inevitable "global fragmentation" from causing chaos, Brzezinski had called for the formation of a "community of developed nations" comprising "the Atlantic states, the more advanced European communist states and Japan". (US Department of State, 2009)

After the Second World War, they were concerned about the dwindling power and influence of the US, and decided to take steps to keep all the power safely in the hands of the elite. It was an ambitious 50 to 100 year project. The first stage would be where all the individual European countries would cede their power to a central government, controlled by the elite – and called the European Union. By November 1993, in Maastricht, the Netherlands, the EU came to power.

The idea was sold to the European nations as simply an innocent way to make trade easier in the region, while each country kept most of its individual sovereignty. Criticism for their ambitious plans was played down as a “conspiracy theory” – and scoffed at.

It wasn't too long, however, before it became clear that much more was intended than just a single currency. Over the past few years more and more talks of a combined EU military force have been heard. In 2017 Germany and France are pushing hard to get the support of the coalition of EU members to join. A recent meeting of EU leaders took all of five minutes to agree to the following:

“The European Commission will allocate £1.3billion (€1.5billion) a year for the defense fund. The money will help develop and buy helicopters, drones and an array of weaponry.” (Mansfield, 2017)

The giant machinery is already in motion – in fact, it has been for decades.

Just before completing this book there was another development in this saga, coming from Berlin, reported in *Politico*. Martin Schulz, the head of Germany’s Social Democrats, is pushing for ever-closer European integration and turn the EU into a ‘United States of Europe’ by 2025.

“I want there to be a constitutional treaty to create a federal Europe,” Schulz said during a speech at a party convention in Berlin. He said that the process of creating this new kind of constitution should involve citizens across the Continent. Once drafted, it would “be presented to the member states, and those who are against it will simply leave the EU.”

Chancellor Angela Merkel is using Schulz’s Social Democrats as a last viable option to try to rescue her own unstable position, and to create a stable government. When asked to comment on Schulz’s plan, she agreed:

“I’m concentrating on saying by 2025, we should have much stronger cooperation on defense, much stronger cooperation in the other issues I’ve mentioned,” (Delcker, 2017)

It’s right there – out in the open – the mask has slipped. The goal is a United Europe, safely under the control of the elite.

The Rockefeller-Brzezinski plan didn’t stop with Europe, and it didn’t end when these men both died. After Europe, the power-hungry forces shaping the world’s decision makers set their sights on unifying the Americas into one state too.

There is supposed to be a new, unified currency called the Amero. The end goal is to join these two bodies – Europe and the Americas – into one union, and become a world government – under the United Nations. The objective has always been nothing short of total world financial and political domination.

“In the next century, nations as we know it will be obsolete; all states will recognize a single, global authority. National sovereignty wasn’t such a great idea after all.”

~ Strobe Talbott, Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Time Magazine, 1992.

This information is there – it’s available, and can be found by anyone who cares to look – and there are only one or two honest conclusions that can be drawn. Either the world’s leaders are totally incompetent, or the whole thing is rigged.

The man in charge of the EU right now, Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Commission, has been called “a Joker” by the media. You can watch a YouTube video of him in which he is obviously drunk slapping heads of State in the face, hitting delegates on the head, and even kissing and dancing with fellow congressmen.

But the consequences of having people like this in power are no joke. Europe is a disaster area. Most of the individual countries are in a critical financial situation, there are problems with the influx of migrants, and it’s not as safe as it was.

These are the kinds of bureaucrats who want to run the world and all of our lives.

As you’re reading this – do you really think that someone like that should be making decisions for you?

Even more sobering is the knowledge that these so-called ‘problems’ often are actually deliberately created by the elite, in order to sway

popular opinion, and psychologically control the masses. It's actually a very old and well-known tactic called "Problem-Reaction-Solution."

"The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed, (and hence clamorous to be led to safety), by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary."

~ H.L. Mencken

The elite power-possessing individuals will deliberately instigate a serious problem. This creates an emotional and strong reaction in the masses. The elite then cleverly offer a "solution" – like creating a bigger army, or spending more money, or raising taxes, reducing Internet freedom or even invading another country – whatever keeps them in power for another year.

A well-educated and self-reliant population, with free access to information and to the truth, doesn't fit into the scheme. In order to control the masses, those in power need to carefully guard their position of authority. Theresa May, for example, wants the UK to censor their Internet freedom. The *Independent* reports:

"Theresa May has refused to rule out censoring the internet like China. The prime minister has looked to introduce sweeping and deep changes to the way the internet works, in what she claims is a necessary move to prevent terror. Those have included restricting the kinds of things people can post online and forcing internet companies to weaken security so that intelligence agencies can read their messages."

(GRIFFIN, 2017)

Meanwhile the problems aren't going away. In the near future, 100 million people are expected to flood into Europe illegally, unless something is done to manage the problem the elite created. As a result of this, crime is on the increase all over the region. The elite

class are all secure in their gated communities, and with their armed personal bodyguards – what difference does it make to them?

They're happy to milk the crisis, spread fear, and convince the man on the street that he is powerless, only to ensure that we continually cede more power to the incompetent elite.

The political solution always seems to be at the cost of individual freedom. The average European man on the street is paying the cost.

The following quote has been attributed to Thomas Jefferson, and it sums up the idea:

“The issue today is the same as it has been throughout all history, whether man shall be allowed to govern himself or be ruled by a small elite.”

This is the situation today, as it has been throughout the history of man. Arrogant, intellectual elitists, who have often inherited their money and position – and added very little value to the world, are running the show.

From the comfort and security of their mansions, with everything that money can buy, they decide that average people are not competent to lead themselves. They have little else to do, so their feeling of entitlement spurs them on to go and change the world into their image by any means necessary; nothing personal, it's just business. People, who have everything that money can buy, all too often only crave more power and control.

All it is doing is destabilizing Europe, and adding more suffering to the world. It was this same elite class that got us embroiled in the war in the Middle East, and it's the same group that will continue to make the troubles of the world fester, and get worse – because it actually suits them.

“If ever a time should come, when vain and aspiring men shall possess the highest seats in government, our country will stand in need of its EXPERIENCED PATRIOTS to prevent its ruin.”

~ Samuel Adams

One of the things I love about America, even though some of the leaders of the country have made some huge mistakes and proven themselves to be totally incompetent, is the ideal of freedom that is constantly upheld.

“Whatever crushes individuality is despotism, no matter what name it is called.” ~ John Stuart Mill

I think it's at risk. Why? It's always at risk. The new generation doesn't get taught about these things at school anymore. We've moved away from the foundations upon which the country was built. The founding principles are all about the freedom of the individual.

“Every man is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man.”

~ Herbert Spencer

I believe that self-reliance, and self-mastery are the most important things to strive for in this life.

The more I am able to pass on these skills, and this knowledge to other people, the more free and self-reliant they become. They are no longer at the mercy of any government or system. When you rely on a government to provide you with food, and to provide everything else for you – you remain at the mercy of other people. It is only once you take responsibility for your own life and actions that you begin to become free and reach your full potential.

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it on to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.”

~ Ronald Reagan

The United States is still the most prosperous, most successful and the freest society in the world. There are more people trying to get into the US than any other country on the globe. That’s no accident, and it’s not the result of propaganda. People want to live here because it’s the best place to live. I meet people who have just moved to the US very often in the place where I live, in South Florida – They’re tired of the conditions in their own countries. They don’t feel safe sending their children to school there anymore – so they come here.

The First World can no longer ignore what’s going on in Africa, The Middle East, and other parts of the developing world. The Europeans are dealing with it in their own cities – because of the huge influx of migrants.

As technology continues to advance, the world is going to continue to become a smaller and smaller place – so it’s vital that each of us does what we can to become free, each in his own way.

“Children should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom.” ~ John Adams

The Right to Bear Arms

“There is a certain enthusiasm in liberty that makes human nature rise above itself, in acts of bravery and heroism.”

~ Alexander Hamilton

On average, it takes 10-15 minutes for police to respond to an emergency call in the US. If you're the victim of a violent crime, that means you're helpless for roughly that amount of time – unless you are able to help yourself.

If your wife or your kids are in danger – what are you going to do for those fifteen minutes? By the time the police arrive, there will be nothing left to do except clean up the mess at the crime scene and haul away your dead carcasses.

Smug, arrogant and self-righteous gun control advocates are delusional, because they are convinced that society is better off without guns, despite the reality. Unarmed people are defenseless against criminals that happen to be physically stronger. If a physically stronger man wants to rape a woman, should she just accept her fate and spread her legs? Does that make sense? Should we just put up with being defenseless and enjoy being robbed, raped and murdered, because the leftists say, *“hey, at least you weren't a victim of gun crime?”* How is this common sense? This is asinine stupidity!

FBI crime statistics show that violent crime has steadily declined in the USA over the past two decades. *Business Insider*, for example, reports that “overall, violent crimes including homicide, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery dropped 38% between 1992 and 2011. The dramatic plunge in violent crime shocked many experts, who predicted America would just get more violent.” (Egan, 2017)

One reason is possibly the improved technologies that the police are able to use, including software that can identify crime “hotspots.” Another might be an increased number of police who are visible in specific areas. You could also argue that any number of factors have contributed to the decrease – but the interesting fact here is that the number of guns has not gone down – quite the opposite.

“There are now more guns than people in the United States. The number of privately owned firearms in US increased from about 185 million in 1993 to 357 million in 2013. Adjusted for the US population, the number of guns per American increased from 0.93 per person in 1993 to 1.45 in 2013, which is a 56% increase in the number of guns per person that occurred during the same period when gun violence decreased by 49%. Of course, that significant correlation doesn’t necessarily imply causation, but it’s logical to believe that those two trends are related.”

(Perry, 2015)

Assault rifles, as leftist politicians and media like to call them, rarely end in violent deaths, compared to other gun types, such as pistols or revolvers. The overwhelming majority of gun deaths in the US are suicides. Without access to guns, people who are determined to end their own lives would simply use other means.

The media over-hypes every “mass shooting,” because it sells newspapers and drives the ratings up.

The technical definition of what constitutes a “mass shooting” is something like four or more randomly selected people getting shot. When you really dig into the issue, reality doesn’t agree with what the media presents to the world. The US is portrayed as the Wild West, where people are mowing each other down in the streets in droves because we are all fucking gun nuts and too stupid not to see how we would be better off without guns.

Those who are against owning guns love to claim that if we reduced the number of weapons, we would automatically reduce crime. This simply isn't true. The statistics show the opposite of that narrative.

It's really only by changing people's minds and hearts that we can reduce crime, because the most dangerous weapon of all is the human mind.

We often see higher rates of violent crime in communities that don't have guns, because people are defenseless, easy targets. Banning guns does little to impact violent crime, and in fact, it often causes violent crimes to escalate. Guns are a great physical equalizer, so when you're not armed, you are at the mercy of those who are physically stronger than you.

Just look at Europe now, as another example. Rapes, murders, acid attacks, terrorism, violent crime, robbery, and knife attacks are skyrocketing in many European countries, along with the influx of migrants. Criminals simply use other weapons when guns are difficult to get.

“An armed society is a polite society. Manners are good when one may have to back up his acts with his life.”

~ Robert A. Heinlein

A good case in point is the gun culture in Switzerland. This tiny country “trails behind only the U.S, Yemen and Serbia in the number of guns per capita. Between 2.3 million and 4.5 million military and private firearms are estimated to be in circulation in a country of only 8 million people. Yet, despite the prevalence of guns, the violent-crime rate is low: government figures show about 0.5 gun homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2010. By comparison, the U.S rate in the same year was about 5 firearm killings per 100,000 people, according to a 2011 U.N. report.”

The factor that makes all the difference is the way Swiss people think about guns. *Time* online reported that “one of the reasons the crime rate in Switzerland is low despite the prevalence of weapons — and also why the Swiss mentality can’t be transposed to the current American reality — is the culture of responsibility and safety that is anchored in society and passed from generation to generation.

Kids as young as 12 belong to gun groups in their local Swiss communities, where they learn sharpshooting. The Swiss Shooting Sports Association runs about 3,000 clubs and has 150,000 members, including a youth section. Many members keep their guns and ammunition at home, while others choose to leave them at the club. And yet, despite such easy access to pistols and rifles, “no members have ever used their guns for criminal purposes.”

(Bachmann, 2012)

“The possession of arms is the distinction of a free man from a slave.” ~ Andrew Fletcher, 1698

The founding fathers of the US constitution understood that people have the natural right to defend themselves. When the masses have no means to defend themselves, they get taken advantage of by tyrants.

“No freeman shall be debarred the use of arms.”

~ Thomas Jefferson

Since we’re divine beings having a human experience, and the premise that the US Constitution is based upon is that it’s assumed our freedom is God-given, and since we’re a nation of self-reliant people – we’re also entitled to keep and bear arms. It has nothing to do with hunting either – the reality is that criminals don’t give up their guns, whether they are legal or not. With the rise of 3D printing, soon people will be able to produce their own weapons at home –

where will that leave the law-abiding citizen who can't own a weapon? Criminals never follow the law anyway.

“The supposed quietude of a good man allures the ruffian; while on the other hand, arms, like law, discourage and keep the invader and plunderer in awe, and preserve order in the world as well as property... for while avarice and ambition have a place in the heart of man, the weak will become a prey to the strong.”

~ Thomas Paine

Every American Citizen is granted the right and it's their sacred duty to keep and bear arms.

The Constitution of The United States Of America is legal evidence of this divine reality and birthright. If you are an American, you were drafted at birth or upon naturalization as a Citizen, into the Militia of The People, whether you like it or not and whether you accept your responsibility or not.

“The militia of the United States consists of all able-bodied males at least 17 years of age and, except as provided in section 313 of title 32, under 45 years of age who are, or who have made a declaration of intention to become, citizens of the United States and of female citizens of the United States who are members of the National Guard.”

~ The Militia of the United States as defined by the U.S. Congress,
U.S. Code, Title 10, Section 311.

Your legal right, sacred duty and responsibility as a Citizen is to keep and bear arms, to be safe and responsible in their use, and to be skillful and competent if it becomes necessary to deploy and discharge them in the use of force.

“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” ~ 2nd Amendment to the US Constitution

If you're not already a Concealed Carry Weapon Permit holder, you should apply to become one and always be armed. Many law enforcement agencies across the country offer firearm training, storage and safety classes to help you become a competent, skilled and safe firearm user and owner. Don't be a fucking lazy ass. Do your part. It's your sacred duty. Owning and using a firearm should be no more unusual than owning and using a kitchen knife, screwdriver or hammer.

“For a people who are free, and who mean to remain so, a well-organized and armed militia is their best security.”

~ Thomas Jefferson

When used properly and responsibly, arms restrain evil interference, and level the playing field. Firearms make everyone physically equal, and remove any physical advantages another person with evil intentions may have over you.

“Both oligarch and tyrant mistrust the people, and therefore deprive them of their arms.”

~ Aristotle

The historical reality is that governments have been responsible for slaughtering hundreds of millions of their own citizens who were disarmed. Do you really want to trust that this will never happen again? It's delusional thinking to assume that going forward because civilization has advanced so much, that everyone in government will never again become evil or corrupted by power. The Founding Fathers of the United States wanted The People to be armed, so as a last resort, they could resist a government that had become tyrannical.

“Congress shall never disarm any citizen unless such as are or have been in actual rebellion.”

~ James Madison

The world is full of evil people. The world is also full of stupid and ignorant people. Wise and smart people who own arms, are masters at using them, and teach their children how to use them responsibly and properly at a young age. If your children are responsible, safe and respectful of the nature of firearms and ammunition, then they will be prepared to defend themselves from evil people. They can educate any irresponsible kids on how to use them properly, ethically, and safely when they inevitably encounter them.

“A militia, when properly formed, are in fact the people themselves... and include all men capable of bearing arms.”

~ Richard Henry Lee

We have a professional Army; paid to fight on foreign soil on our behalf, but back at home we have a sacred duty to protect ourselves. Even Edgar Cayce, pointed out that this was the only weakness in the US – the only way we can be overthrown, is from within.

“One loves to possess arms, though they hope never to have occasion for them.” ~ Thomas Jefferson

Did you know that Admiral Yamamoto, who was the supreme commander of the Imperial Japanese Navy during World War II, was educated at Harvard, and said that if they ever tried to invade the United States, that there would be a gun behind every blade of grass? He feared the Militia of the American People, and rightly so.

The fact is, there are plenty of forces in the world that would like nothing better than to destroy our country and similar ones in the West.

Terrorism is constantly in the news. Not long ago a huge cache of weapons was found near a mosque in Germany, for example. The media reported:

“German authorities discovered "weapons of war" during a raid close to a radical mosque, yet another instance of the failure of gun control. The stockpile was found by a SWAT team in Nordrhein-Westfalen, inside "a cold room of a greengrocer," (Bandler, 2017)

The weapons included AK47's, RPG's, grenades, and other weapons of war. Keep in mind that most of Europe isn't armed, and Germany has some of the strictest gun control laws in the world. But is it as safe a place to live as it used to be? Each of us has to make up our own minds as to what kind of world we want to live in.

“The great object is that every man be armed. Everyone who is able might have a gun.” ~ Patrick Henry

Leftists who think everyone and everything needs to be controlled always insist on banning guns – but does it work? Gun control did not stop the Bataclan massacre in Paris from happening. Instead, those laws ensured that only the terrorists would have illegal firearms and their victims would be totally defenseless. At least in America, we have the chance to shoot back.

“If someone has a gun and is trying to kill you, it would be reasonable to shoot back with your own gun.” ~ The Dalai Lama

Besides the local problems and threats to safety, there are also international forces that are always seeking for weak spots to exploit.

Yuri Alexandrovich Bezmenov was a journalist for RIA Novosti and a former KGB informant from the Soviet Union who defected to Canada in 1970. I would encourage you to search for his name online, and watch some of the many videos he's done that are now available on YouTube. He explains a 4-step psychological warfare program envisioned by the KGB to break people's spirits, and to

make them ready to accept communism as a way of life, even though the evidence shows that it doesn't work. The four steps are:

- Demoralization
- Destabilization
- Crisis
- Normalization

Bezmenov insisted that the United States were already way past the demoralization step and already in the destabilization phase by the mid-eighties.

He talks about how Communist propaganda entered the Western media, and the methods employed to break people's spirits, and disrupt the society. Their primary focus was the academia, and the media – the intellectual elite.

It opens your eyes to the kinds of things that exist in this world, and the way your mind is affected by ideologies and propaganda. It's imperative to learn to think for yourself, and make an informed decision about what sits right in your own heart and mind.

I've included these ideas here, because I believe that America, and the way our society is set up, is the perfect environment for people who are self-reliant. It's the kind of place that allows you – in fact it encourages you – to become the master of yourself.

“Man exists for his own sake and not to add a laborer to the state.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

America was designed for self-reliant people right from the outset. When the early pioneers and settlers came to this country, it was not an easy place to settle. It required a certain frame of mind, and a kind of toughness of spirit – the ability to be completely self-reliant. Not all of the early settlers had what it took. Many of them returned home again – some in triumph, but many more in defeat.

“Statistics by nationality are quite striking. According to a report in 1908 comparing the departures in 1908 with the arrivals of 1907, 61% of the Southern Italians returned home. Croatians and Slovenians (59.8%), Slovaks (56.1%) and Hungarians (48.7%) also had high return rates. The lowest rate, 5.1%, belonged to the Jews (categorized as "Hebrews"). This is understandable since they fled the pogroms to save their lives and had nowhere to return.

Surprisingly, when you think of all the nostalgic songs about their homeland, the Irish rarely went back -- only 6.3%. Others with a low return rate were Czechs (7.8%), English (10.4%) and Scandinavians (10.9%). In the middle range were Germans (15.5%), Serbs and Bulgarians (21.9%), Finns (23.3%), Poles (33.9%) and Northern Italians (37.8%). Interestingly enough, the Irish and the Swedish were also groups with a very high percentage of woman immigrants.” (Przecha, 2012)

When immigrants come to this country today, many of them end up on welfare – and don’t add value to the society. While it is true that some have come to master the American dream, and become self-reliant – others are here only for the free shit. It’s nothing but a burden on taxpayers. They have no intention of naturalizing, adopting the culture, and becoming valued members of society. They’re simply earning money to send back home – to another country. Worst of all, they’re easy targets for leftist politicians, offering them more free shit for votes.

Think of it this way – would a parent be happy to have his adult child living at home indefinitely, without making any effort to become productive, useful, and skilled or to even try to get a job? It’s a burden to support even your own child, beyond a certain point, so how much more so a complete stranger?

We’re paying large numbers of people to simply sit at home and do nothing.

The way I see it, the ultimate battle is a battle of the mind and heart. We need to help these people to grow, evolve and become masters of their own lives. Not to do it for them, but to give them the tools to help themselves. Welfare was designed to be a temporary safety net, not a way of life.

Any sane person who examines what's going on in the world today must agree that society is sick. More than any time before in history, we are at a crossroads, and it's up to us to make the right kinds of decisions to secure a better future.

Take for example the gun violence in Chicago. That city is in the news all the time, and it has the tightest gun laws in the country because it has been run by Democrats for decades. The reality is that criminals don't obey the laws. Law abiding citizens don't have guns because they're obeying the law, so therefore only the police and the criminals have the guns – and does it work? Clearly it doesn't.

We need community leaders to intervene and people who are skilled and trained at de-escalating violence and revenge before it leads to murders to help heal the community and make it safe. People are dying in droves in Chicago, but nobody seems to care. Most people will look at it and shake their heads – but won't do a single thing to help solve the problem. That's always somebody else's problem. We don't get involved in the community, and we don't add our weight behind finding and creating a solution.

What we are facing is an ideological battle – which means that we have to make up our minds to make a difference. We can't sit by idly while we let others run the show – and ruin our world.

Another example is the water in Flint Michigan, which is poisoned. The most disturbing part of it is that the incompetent people who allowed it to happen keep getting re-elected. Then we wonder why it still isn't fixed two years later. In fact, 96% of all incumbent politicians get re-elected. We keep voting the same incompetent and

corrupt jerk-offs into office and then we're perplexed and puzzled when nothing changes. We should be demanding excellence in government instead of tolerating mediocrity and incompetence.

“The real battle is won in the mind. It's won by guys who understand their areas of weakness, who sit and think about it, plotting and planning to improve. Attending to the detail. Work on their weaknesses and overcome them. Because they can.”

~ Marcus Luttrell

I highly recommend that you get a copy of Marcus Luttrell's inspirational book, “Lone Survivor.” He's a retired US Navy SEAL with an incredible will to survive. The tragic story of he and his three SEAL teammates heroic efforts to survive being hunted and attacked by hundreds of Afghan Taliban fighters during operation ‘Red Wings’ in 2006 was made into a movie starring Mark Wahlberg as Marcus in 2013.

Finally, to wrap up my thoughts about the subject of gun control, I want to go into the infamous and tragic mass shooting that happened in Newtown in 2012 – a truly horrible event – but one that we must consider bravely.

Why do Mass Shootings Happen?

The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting occurred on December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut.

20-year-old Adam Lanza fatally shot 20 children between six and seven years old, as well as six adult staff members. Before driving to the school, he had already shot and killed his mother at their Newtown home. As first responders arrived at the scene, Lanza committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. Probably just about everybody knows the story, so similar to the Columbine story – but the question is – why do these things happen?

In 2017 the *New York Times* published some shocking information that sheds a little light on the question.

Adam was a kid on the autistic spectrum, and was found to have Asperger's syndrome in 2005. His father and mother had split up. He had mental problems and mental challenges that needed specialized help.

His mother was a gun owner, and she had taught her son to shoot. She also had Adam forcibly committed and medicated several times in the course of his life.

From what I've shared about my mother, you can see that people with mental problems or illnesses often think there's nothing wrong with them, and they resent it when they finally get out. And they really resent it when they're off their medication the next time.

Before the shooting occurred, Adam's mother had been begging authorities to help because she said that she felt like she was losing her ability to reach her son. She just wasn't able to communicate with him, influence him, or reach him emotionally. He was getting more and more belligerent. She was becoming afraid of him and just didn't

feel safe around him. It reminds me of the way my mother made me feel the last time I was around her.

But what possesses this kid to pick up a gun and not only kill his mother violently, but to go murder a bunch of defenseless kids with a rifle?

Schools are obviously all gun free zones. The sad thing that came out afterwards was that Adam had maintained an online relationship with a woman two years prior to the shooting. She knew he was obsessed with mass shootings, and testified that Adam kept a detailed list about similar shootings in history.

Adam, in his communications with this woman said that mass shootings were a sign that society is sick, and that there's a problem that's not being addressed.

Before Adam committed the murders at the elementary school, his mother had volunteered to work there.

Perhaps Adam was thinking: "My mom is locking me up in a mental institution. There's really nothing wrong with me. No one really understands me or can reach me. She seems to care more about these kids at this elementary school than her own son," and on some level he started to resent that and he started to hate her for it.

Remember, the motivation behind everything that human beings do breaks down into either trying to get love or give love. If he felt that his own mother was giving more love to those kids that she volunteered for than her own son, obviously you could see how he could grow to resent that especially if she's committing him and locking him up in a mental institution because of the problems he has.

Adam didn't want to be forcibly committed and medicated again. He resented it each time more and more. Just like my own mother did. His mother begged for help for a year saying she was losing him and

unable to reach him anymore. She was scared of him. Although he lived in the same house, he only communicated with her via email, and he didn't go out for months on end. Nobody seemed to be able to help, or cared enough to try, at least.

He shot his mother several times in the face and then went and murdered those kids, possibly because he felt that she loved those kids more than she and his father loved him. Whatever it was, it takes a lot of hate and anger to shoot your mother in the face multiple times.

I don't believe that Adam ever felt that people understood him. We all tend to ignore festering psychological sores like this for years, simply because we don't understand it.

When obvious warning signs appear, nobody acts decisively to diffuse a potential time bomb. Then, afterwards, when the worst has happened, and people die, we get candlelight vigils and the Eiffel tower goes dark so many times these days for humanities latest mass murder, that it's blinking on and off like a fucking strobe light.

The reports in the New York Times revealed the shocking truth.

More than a year before the shooting, Adam had literally said, "I'm going to murder my mother and then I'm going to go to the school and shoot a bunch of kids." (Salam, 2017)

This is the thing that enrages me personally. It was reported to the police. The kids at school knew something was brewing, saying "Yeah, the kid's kind of nutty" but they didn't take him seriously and they didn't think it was that big a deal and the police basically dropped the ball.

The Obama administration didn't want all that information coming out about Newtown, because it didn't help their narrative that guns are evil and they just need to be banned. The information was withheld by the FBI until just recently, when Barack Obama finished

his term. You can see it's not favorable to the narrative that guns should be given up. In other words, if Adam Lanza didn't have access to those firearms he wouldn't have been able to murder all those kids. Therefore we should ban all the guns, to prevent these kinds of tragedies happening in the future.

Well the reality is that there are red flags that can be seen before anyone commits these kinds of mass murders or mass shootings. In almost every one of these cases, even the terrorist attacks, a lot of the time these people are mentally ill. Sometimes the perpetrators were known to the authorities and the authorities were either too overwhelmed, or they miscalculated and didn't perceive the person as being a threat, therefore they did nothing about it.

That's what happened with Adam Lanza. That just makes it look like law enforcement is incompetent. It has nothing to do with the fact that there was access to guns. The police could have gone in and taken the kid to court and made sure the weapons were taken out of the home.

Then again, if you look at 3D printing and everything that is coming down the pipeline in the near future of technology, we are fast approaching a time where this kind of thing is really not going to matter because anyone is going to be able to go to the store and for a couple hundred dollars buy a high quality industrial grade 3D printer that can print high strength metals and plastics. They have the technology to do this now, it just tends to be a little bit more expensive. That's something we're going to have to deal with. The reality is criminals simply don't follow the law.

A century ago people still had legal access to machineguns in the US and there weren't mass shootings at schools or the other mass murder attacks committed around the world. What has changed in society that causes a human being to decide that mass murdering a lot of their fellow human beings is a viable way to achieve an outcome they want?

The media sensationalizes these things because they are the kind of thing that make people tune in and watch the TV, and that means better ratings, and they can make more money with advertising.

At the same time, the mass murderer feels that he fulfills his need for significance. In other words, they're important, they matter, and after death people will remember them even though in life nothing they did was ever significant.

With almost all mass murders, terrorist attacks and shootings, the perpetrators exhibited very noticeable red flags that belies their intentions.

“When the next shooting happens at a school, an office building, or a movie theater, the question will again be asked: “What made him snap?” But mass murder is not an impulsive crime. Virtually every one of these attacks, forensic investigations show, is a predatory crime, methodically planned and executed. Therein lies the promise of threat assessment: The weeks, months, or even years when a would-be killer is escalating toward violence are a window of opportunity in which he can be detected and thwarted.” (Follman, 2017)

Asininely calling for law-abiding citizens to give up their God given right to keep and bear arms because our leaders and politicians are incompetent is not the solution. They use these events to push an agenda of more control and power instead of simply solving the problem. This is what happens when we pay no attention to politics and what is done in our name behind closed doors. We elect, and are ruled by mostly incompetent idiots and who aren't qualified to lead old ladies across the street.

Every time you hear of a shooting, the politicians on one side want to ban the guns. The people that are pro-guns say the opposite. Each side retreats to their corners and the real cause of the problem, (in this case it was mental illness), doesn't even get addressed.

Integrating the East and West

Terrorism is a sinister threat, and a worldwide festering wound at the moment. Just about every other week we hear news about another terror attack in Europe. At the heart of the issue is the integration of people from different cultures and ideologies – all crammed into a shrinking world.

I have a huge base of clients from countries with very different cultures to the American culture. There are people from countries where arranged marriages are normal – such as in India, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Turkey, and all over the Middle East, and Asia.

If you have self-hating, self-loathing, suicidal people that are unable to provide for themselves, moving to Western society, certain problems are bound to develop – it's inevitable.

Men from this traditional background often find it hard to approach women in the West, to ask them out on dates, and to get laid. It's frustrating, and they really struggle with the transition. To have to go out on a date, and be confident enough to attract the ladies is a huge challenge for people who didn't grow up in this kind of culture. It's hard to develop the skills, and to understand how to invest in yourself to be able to add value with a useful product or service.

Guys from these cultures often feel like failures as men because of this. What I teach in my first book, *How To Be A 3% Man*, can fill in their knowledge gap and help them succeed when they apply it. Many European cities are actually teaching dating and pickup classes to migrants to help them socialize, date and integrate.

Some of them simply don't understand the rules of the game, and it has a negative effect on their self-esteem, and how they view

themselves. Eventually they start to hate themselves, and hate their lives. They're miserable, wanting a woman that seems impossible to get. They're angry, and pissed off. They project this self-hating and self-loathing energy onto everyone else they encounter who has what they want and lack. Remember that whatever anyone says or does to you is always a reflection of what they carry inside and how they feel about themselves – so they come across as antagonistic and unfriendly. The reality is that deep down they simply want to be like you and have what you have.

Of course we still have a very long way to go before all of these problems can be resolved – but the threat is a very real one.

Perhaps the biggest challenge is to find a way to integrate the traditions and mindset of Islam into a modern Western setting – there is a kind of culture clash, and it's loaded with tension.

A good place to start mapping out the road for the future, is to look at where the whole clash started, and to understand the history behind all of it – so to that end, let's briefly examine the past, and then look at the present day.

A Brief History of Islamic Conquest

A lot of people are puzzled as to why things are the way they are in the world today. To them it is a mystery and a shock that individuals can detonate bombs, mercilessly kill strangers, or commit acts of terror.

You see this every time there's a terrorist attack, the person is yelling "Allahu Akbar!" and he is holding an ISIS flag. Often the attacker gets killed during the attack, and the media are quick to say: "We may never know the real motivations for this senseless act of violence." A lot of politicians, the ones that are incompetent are saying, "This is just something we're going to have to learn to live with."

I believe that in order to understand something, you need to look into it more deeply than that. That's why I follow people like Robert Spencer, for example. In 2003 he founded and has since directed Jihad Watch, a blog which he describes as containing "news of the international jihad, and commentary which is dedicated to "bringing public attention to the role that jihad theology and ideology plays in the modern world, and to correcting popular misconceptions about the role of jihad and religion in modern-day conflicts."

What I like about Robert is that every time there's an attack, he looks into it thoroughly, he looks into the motivations and he also knows the Koran backwards and forwards and he knows the verses of the Koran that the Jihadists use to justify their interpretation. He's an expert that people should pay attention to. (His Twitter handle is @jihadwatchRS if you would like to find out more).

Knowing a little bit about the history of Islamic conquest helps to put things into perspective, and makes the current world situation more understandable.

Conquest has been a part of Islam right from the get go. Right after the Prophet Mohammed's death, his family members were all poisoned, beheaded or otherwise killed by people who disagreed about the correct interpretation of Sharia Law. Things continued in that way from there.

“The first major conquest, renowned for its brutality, occurred in Arabia itself, immediately after Muhammad's death in 632. Many tribes which had only nominally accepted Islam's authority, upon Muhammad's death, figured they could break away; however, Muhammad's successor and first caliph, or successor, Abu Bakr, would have none of that, and proclaimed a jihad against these apostates, known in Arabic as the "Ridda Wars" (or Apostasy Wars). According to historians, tens of thousands of Arabs were put to the sword until their tribes re-submitted to Islam.

The colorful accounts contained in the Muslim tradition are typified by constant warfare, which normally goes as follows: Muslims go to a new region and offer the inhabitants three choices: 1) submit (i.e., convert) to Islam; 2) live as second-class citizens, or "dhimmis," paying special taxes and accepting several social debilitations; 3) fight to the death.” (Ibrahim, 2012)

Radical Islam is a Theo Political belief system that has been fighting to rule the world since 622 AD. That means for the last 1,394 years there have been wars with that single aim in mind.

To be completely fair, Christianity had its fair share of war, conquest and trouble during the same periods of history, but the two systems have evolved in very different directions.

The so-called Protestant Reformation was the 16th-century religious, political, intellectual and cultural upheaval that nearly destroyed Catholic Europe. It was a brutal and bloody time, but it set in place the structures and beliefs that would define the Western world in the modern era.

Reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin and Henry VIII challenged papal authority and questioned the Catholic Church's ability to define Christian practice. They argued for a religious and political redistribution of power into the hands of Bible-and pamphlet-reading pastors and princes. The disruption triggered wars, persecutions and the so-called Counter-Reformation.

It came with a cost. Many lives were lost, and wars raged for hundreds of years, but at the end of it, we were left with a society that was free to determine its own rule – and it is a moderate one.

Islam, on the other hand, went in a different direction. While there are some who will claim that there have been changes and reforms in Islam, and it's true – there have been - the fact is that Jihad – or Holy War – is still a big part of it. The moderates never completely secured the power to rule, and instead the Radical factions are still very active. The ideology of radicalism is still firmly rooted.

Like it or not, the world is at War with radical Islam, and has been for the past 1,300 years. Until the ideology is defeated and has no legitimacy, this will not go away.

Shortly after the death of the Prophet Mohammed, the Arabian Peninsula under the Rashidun and Umayyad Caliphates saw a century of rapid expansion. Many people are unaware of the fact that Islam invaded Europe in those centuries, including the Moorish invasion of Spain. Many of the castles and forts on the Mediterranean coast were built during this time to repel the constant invasions. Islam was determined to spread and take over the entire world, and as they forced their way into Europe, the local population retreated, or fought back to protect their lands – with varying degrees of success.

The Islamic forces took over parts of Spain (the Iberian Peninsula) and started pushing further and further north, threatening the local inhabitants.

In 732 AD, Charles “The Hammer” Martel repelled the Moors, which came up through Spain from North Africa, heading for the city of Tours, and saved Europe and Christianity from radical Islamic invasion. Historians disagree about some of the details of the battle, including the numbers and the casualties – but it was a decisive battle that had been brewing for more than a decade. The turning point of the battle was when “The Hammer” raided the Umayyad army’s loot, forcing the cavalry to turn and protect their stash, which looked to their fellow soldiers to be a retreat. Soon the entire army started retreating, and finally the invading forces were surrounded, defeated, and the stragglers were chased back across the Mediterranean.

Of course, while that part of Europe was safe for a while, it was not the end of the story.

One of the biggest bones of contention between Islam and Christianity was the city of Constantinople, which is known as Istanbul today. Its strategic position made it a key to the Middle East.

Most people don’t understand that the cradle of Christianity was once to be found right there. One of the most famous buildings there is the Hagia Sophia, the first Christian Church of the Roman Empire.

The capture of Constantinople on 29 May 1453 marked the end of the Byzantine Empire, which was the continuation of the Roman Empire dating to 27 BC. The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople also dealt a massive blow to Christendom, as the Muslim Ottoman armies thereafter were left unchecked to advance into Europe without an enemy to their rear. After the conquest, Sultan Mehmed II transferred the capital of the Ottoman Empire from Edirne to Constantinople.

That famous church was converted into a mosque. The bells, altar, iconostasis, and other relics were destroyed and the mosaics depicting Jesus, his Mother Mary, Christian saints and angels were also destroyed or plastered over. Islamic features—such as the mihrab, minbar, and four minarets—were added.

The Ottoman Empire lasted 600 years, and the famous building is a museum today.

In 1571, the Christian Venetian fleet at Lepanto fought and decisively defeated an Ottoman Empire Muslim invading fleet. This decisive battle took place on the northern edge of the Gulf of Corinth, off western Greece.

It was an important time for Europe, because the Reformation was still underway, and Christians were still murdering Christians all across Europe. It marked the end of the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, and it was the biggest naval battle in centuries. More than 400 floating platforms were involved (the galleys and galleasses that were still the direct descendants of the ancient trireme warships). Again Islam was repelled from the shores of Europe.

The Battle Of Vienna in 1683 was another major milestone in the constant struggle. Germanic and Austrian knights fought at the gates of Vienna to repel invading Ottoman forces, who had besieged Vienna for more than two months.

The battle marked the first time the Commonwealth and the Holy Roman Empire had cooperated militarily against the Ottomans, and it is often seen as a turning point in history, after which "the Ottoman Turks ceased to be a menace to the Christian world" But, of course, it didn't end there either.

The Barbary Wars were a series of conflicts that culminated in two wars fought at different times over the same reasons between the United States, Sweden, and the Barbary states (Tunis, Algiers, and Tripoli) of North Africa in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The Islamic Barbary pirates demanded tribute from American merchant vessels in the Mediterranean Sea. If ships of a given country failed to pay, the pirates would attack the ship and take their goods, and often enslave crewmembers or hold them for ransom.

When Thomas Jefferson became President of the United States in March 1801, he refused to pay tribute and sent a United States Naval fleet to the Mediterranean; the fleet bombarded various fortified pirate cities in present-day Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria, and the American fleet was guaranteed safe passage, and captives were released.

The Sultan promised to leave the Americans alone. Thomas Jefferson paid them off, and so he thought everything was resolved.

Unfortunately for Jefferson and his men, there's something in Islam, in the Koran, called Taqiyya. The moderates and the radicals argue over what it means. It says in the Koran that if you have to deny your faith in order to avoid being killed or murdered, you should lie and say you're not a Muslim. You should deny your faith; you should deceive those who are trying to harm you. The radicals say that as long as it furthers the cause of Islam, you can lie, you can pretend you're a moderate when in reality you're a moderate until you get to a position of strength to where you can again fight.

So this is basically what happened in Tripoli. Thomas Jefferson was thinking it had all been resolved, but it was all a lie.

The Barbary Pirates went right back to raiding. So Thomas Jefferson sent the Marines back over there and kicked their asses a second time. And after they kicked their asses a second time, they didn't fuck with American vessels anymore.

In the famous Marine hymn, *The Shores of Tripoli* that talks about battles that the US Marines have encountered originally comes from the Barbary wars.

During the 1970's radicals in Iran allied with leftists and college youth to take over the state. If you look at photos of people living in Iran before that time, it looks like most European or even American cultures, with people wearing the fashions of the day, and living a

relatively free and unrestricted life. After the revolution, the picture is very different.

Once they took over, the leftists got executed. Those people were little more than useful idiots to the Radicals. Strict Sharia Law was enforced, and the influence of the West on Iran was stopped cold. Anyone who was a threat to the state got executed.

Over the last few decades, these radical forces at work in the world have been simmering, growing in strength, and looking for a chance to strike back at the West. They are still using leftists, right here in our current day society. Through all the victories, and all the defeats, the war against Radical Islam still continues today.

The Situation Today

There are many interpretations and expressions of Islam across the globe – and to be fair, most of them are peaceful. What’s interesting, however, is that a certain number of the Saudis, Kuwaitis and Qataris have been investing a lot of oil wealth into spreading the Wahhabi sect of Islam – the most violent and warlike of them all. ISIS, and Al-Qaeda are believers in this Islamic Supremacist doctrine. They only focus on jihad, and the most violent and radical teachings and verses of the Quran, dismissing the more peaceable ones.

It boils down to what is in a person’s heart when reading or trying to interpret any spiritual tradition. If your heart is filled with hate and destruction, you will resonate with the most destructive, violent and extreme verses and interpretations. If your heart is filled with love, you will resonate with spiritual passages that preach unconditional love, humility, brotherhood and compassion.

If we look back at what happened in the surge in Iraq in 2007, we saw that the peaceful Sunni tribes initially invited the Al Qaeda forces into their home cities. These were supposed to be freedom fighters, which would ‘protect the locals from the Americans.’

In reality they were basically gangsters, who forcibly demanded women in marriage, and enforced their will with violence. When they got in, and started intermarrying, they took over, and started imposing their radical views on the Sunnis, which then eventually led to the Anbar Awakening, Sunni Awakening or the Anbar Salvation Council.

Michael Yon wrote about it in his blogs, and the images he captured of innocent children murdered in the conflict are heartbreaking. His article entitled “Bless the Beasts and Children” tells the story in graphic detail:

“The stench from the graves was horrific. The children had been decapitated. The term “al Qaeda” is used here, because Iraqi police, soldiers and civilians said al Qaeda had taken the village of al Hamira and done this. Most of al Qaeda in Iraq consists of Iraqis, not foreigners. Even the animals had been “murdered.” I saw these things with my own eyes, recorded them with my video and still cameras, and provided the map coordinates and names of American and Iraqi officials. Media ignored this massacre until pressure mounted from home to report it.”

“The basic outline of the Awakening is well known. After initially accepting al Qaeda in Iraq due to a shared anti-occupation and anti-Shia agenda, Sunni Arabs chafed under Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI’s) fanatic religious program. AQI responded by terrorizing those it claimed to defend, prompting Sunnis to partner with U.S. forces to rid their communities of these extremists. The model successfully tested in al-Anbar province – once Iraq’s most violent – was adopted in other AQI-plagued regions, contributing to a neutralization of the insurgency.” (McCormack, 2010)

Once the extremists had taken root in the area, they tried to control everyone, imposing their version of radical Islam on the peaceful tribes of Anbar. Tribal elders sat in meetings with US military leaders, and begged them to help get rid of these violent, controlling people. They were murdering their relatives, demanding their sisters and daughters in marriage – and those who resisted were mercilessly killed. I highly recommend Michael Yon’s book, “Moment Of Truth In Iraq” to understand what really happened with the surge in Iraq that led to the end of the insurgency in 2007-2008.

When Obama pulled the troops out of Iraq, things changed drastically. The Americans were the strongest “tribe” in the area, and acted like mediators between these opposing forces – but that all changed.

The violent pattern repeated itself over and over again. Radical Imams preached to the young people, promising young, impressionable soldiers they would have virgins and other rewards in the afterlife, if they offered up their lives in battle. Men and women were given empty promises of glories in the hereafter.

Add to this the age-old custom of inter-marrying relatives, and what you get is a recipe for trouble. The *New York Times* confirms it:

“Across the Arab world today an average of 45 percent of married couples are related. In some parts of Saudi Arabia, particularly in the south... the rate of marriage among blood relatives ranges from 55 to 70 percent, among the highest rates in the world, according to the Saudi government.” (Kershaw, 2003)

It’s a scientific fact that when you marry your second-cousin, your children will tend to have IQ levels that are lower than the parents.

Now a lot of these people are moving to the Western world, and failing to integrate into their new surroundings. It’s hard to get a job, or find a marriage partner. When people like this find a belief system that justifies projecting their own self-loathing onto other people – such as the ideologies of radical Islam – what you get is terrorism, violence, and chaos – breeding in our own back yard.

The fact is that terrorist networks are infiltrating societies across the West. In Britain, for example, it was recently reported that MI5 (the British Intelligence Agency) are keeping tabs on thousands of individuals. “Up to 23,000 potential jihadis are reportedly living in Britain as police investigate the sprawling terror network linked to Manchester bomber Salman Abedi.” (Moore, 2017)

This came after the Islamic State (ISIS) claimed responsibility for the Manchester bombing that killed 22 innocent people, among them school children, and injured at least 60 others.

The elite have no qualms about letting innocent people die, and then utter useless platitudes after each attack while keeping safely out of the line of fire, and then doing nothing different and making no real attempt to solve the problem.

Mosul fell back into the hands of the extremists, and efforts were made by the US troops to liberate the area. All tyrants are the same. Dying is for the “little people” to do. The leaders of the radical movements were the first to haul ass when things got difficult and the area was lost to the anti-ISIS coalition, but at the same time, when their foot soldiers returned from battle, unsuccessfully, many of them were shot dead, set on fire, or thrown into vats of acid. You either die fighting, or you succeed.

Before the US invasion and armed conflict in 2003, Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council, chaired by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, issued a series of sweeping pardons for inmates of Iraqi prisons. (Brahimi, 2002)

Pedophiles, rapists and mass murderers and criminals were set free. The worst of the worst of society were let out of prison – and where do you think they ended up fighting? It's no wonder that the Al Qaeda forces display such vicious cruelty, and are capable of such inhuman and savage acts.

You've got all these suicidal people who hate themselves, hate the world, and hate life – and they project that hatred onto everything around them – onto all their fellow human beings. Then there's a belief system that says you can live like a gangster, rape and pillage as you please, murder, and take what you want. You can take a palace, and have sex slaves to do with what you please.

A belief system that justifies this kind of deviant thinking creates a situation like the one we see in the region. Eventually each group starts to disintegrate from within, becoming more and more savage, eating itself because there's always a stricter and more brutal

interpretation of their radical Islamist ideology. It's a death cult, full of savage war criminals arguing with and murdering each other over who is more correct in their religious interpretation.

"Belief of a cruel God makes a cruel man."

~ Thomas Paine

These people are basically weak of mind and hard of heart. The fact that they've got so much ice around the heart means that you simply can't reach certain people.

During the Surge in Iraq, General Petraeus told his own troops:

"We're going to be making peace with people that have killed our brothers and sisters because we have to."

What we have to do, according to him, is separate what he called the 'reconcilables' which are those you can reason with, those you can make peace with and who will honor those commitments from the 'irreconcilables.' The irreconcilables are those that just will not make peace, they're dead-enders and they're just too convinced, and dug into their position, to be helped. Make peace with those you can make peace with, and fucking kill everybody else or put them in a cage.

In my opinion, the solution to these problems lies with each one of us, individually. We need to master our own minds, become self-reliant, cultivate inner peace and learn to think independently. We need to embrace our Freedom as divine beings, and encourage and help our fellow human beings to do the same.

In order to do that, there needs to be an open and honest line of communication between people to discuss the root causes of the problems, including the things that are uncomfortable to talk about and solutions to discredit and destroy the radical ideology, those who preach it and those who finance the spread of it.

“I belong to no religion. My religion is love. Every heart is my temple.” ~ Rumi

Opening the Channels of Communication

You can't solve a problem unless you can talk about it openly, honestly and freely.

All over the world there are forward-thinking people from all faiths who envision a similar kind of future – and people working hard towards turning that vision of unity into a reality.

“When men yield up the privilege of thinking, the last shadow of liberty quits the horizon.”

~ Thomas Paine

The Muslim world is divided between the moderates and the radicals, and while some are incited to bloodlust and radical action in the name of Allah, others prefer a more peaceful approach, and using words and ideas instead of weapons. There literally is a civil war going on in Islam between the moderates and radicals. The majority of deaths at the hands of Islamic radicals are overwhelmingly Muslim.

There are people like Imam Tawhidi – a popular moderate Islamic leader from Australia, who is trying hard to reform Islam – and risking his life to do it.

Others who disagree with his peaceful approach have threatened to kill him, behead him, branded him as an infidel, spat on him in the streets, and even put a \$5,000 bounty on his head. The threats kept coming, and in 2017 Imam Tawhidi asked his followers to help him fund a \$30,000 security upgrade at his home, including a fence to keep the radicals out, and protect his life. Even so, he continues to speak out.

“Belief in freedom means we believe in freedom for all humans, not only for those who agree with us... The same way nations united

against Nazis in the past, we must unite against political Islam and radical Islamism. Many like me are with you.”

~ Imam Tawhidi

We need to collectively be working to make the world safe enough for moderates like him to make a difference.

“I am a free human being. I don't belong to anyone or any system. Religion is here to serve humanity, humanity doesn't serve religion.”

~ Imam Tawhidi

Just a three minute drive from where I live in Orlando, on June 12, 2016, Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old security guard, killed 49 people and wounded 58 others in a terrorist attack/hate crime inside Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando. I could see the crime scene from my living room in Orlando.

About a month before that, there was an Iranian Imam speaking at the Hussein Islamic Center in Sanford, saying that gay people need to be killed. Sheikh Farrokh Sekaleshfar is a British-born scholar who lived in Iran and travels the world to spread his hateful message:

“You have to be happy for that homosexual person... we believe in an afterlife, we believe in an eternal life... and with this death sentence, you will be forgiven and you won't be accountable in the hereafter.” (WFTV9)

“We have to have that compassion for people. With homosexuals, it's the same. Out of compassion, let's get rid of them now.” (News, 2016)

He spoke rationally, as if this was a compassionate thing to do. This was his mindset – based upon the most violent verses in the Quran. “Do gay people a favor, and just kill them.” These kinds of seditious hate preachers, gangsters, thugs and radical Imams should be

removed and replaced with those who preach love, tolerance and brotherhood.

We as collective humanity need to make it clear that this kind of murderous savagery is not going to be tolerated. It's not acceptable to come into our community and incite vulnerable people with these ideas of the dark ages. After the nightclub attack, the Sanford Mosque was questioned by the media as to why they let someone talk about these ideas – and their attitude was one of indifference and “we’ll have whoever we want speak at our Mosque” kind of attitude. Sedition is illegal in every country in the world.

Europe is closing radical Mosque's, locking up and deporting radical Imams and their financiers all over the continent.

The same thing happened at the Islamic center in Boca Raton, near where my father lives. Professor Bassem Al Halabi, is the president of the Islamic Center Of Boca Raton FL, and FAU professor of the Muslim Student Association. In 2016 they hosted a so-called Islamophobia panel discussion where he openly supported the ideologies of Sharia law, including cutting off people's hands when they are caught stealing, and implying that the US would be better off under Sharia Law:

“I will just mention one and stop here, which is let's say cutting off the hands of a person if they steal. It sounds very severe. It sounds very barbaric, I know. But if takes one or two people to have their hands cut off, and then there's no more stealing and there's no more stealing in the whole nation – that's a much better resolution than having hundreds of people die every day.” (Breitbart, 2016)

His comments were met by outrage in the audience, but he wasn't fired from the university, and little was done to stop these kinds of ideas from being spread among the impressionable youth on campus.

The Muslim Student Association (MSA) has chapters all over the country, and similar ideas are cropping up more and more frequently.

Just recently I saw a video on John Guandolo's twitter feed, @JohnGuandolo where Amir Abdel Malik, a member of the association, stands up in front of a group of students at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) and proclaims: "I will die to establish Islam. We will end the Pledge of Allegiance."

Many of the preachers who spoke in Boca Raton pre 9/11, were openly promoting the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic supremacism. Some of these people were deported, because of their ties to radical Islam. There was also a website where they openly promoted these ideas.

The Muslim Brotherhood is an international Sunni Islamist organization founded in Egypt in 1928. The Brotherhood's goal is to instill radical Islam into every country in the world, and take over from the inside by increasing their population numbers through immigration and out-breeding the native populations. They then run for office, work in government and eventually legislate Sharia Law into existence and as the new law of the land.

Its mottos include "Believers are but Brothers", "Islam is the Solution", and "Allah is our objective; the Quran is the Constitution; the Prophet is our leader; jihad is our way; death for the sake of Allah is our wish."

In 2004 an alert Maryland Police officer noticed a woman wearing traditional Islamic clothing videotaping the support structure of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. When the trail was followed, it led to a hidden basement, where the FBI discovered archives of the Muslim Brotherhood in North America. One of the documents was innocently titled "An Explanatory Memorandum: On the General Strategic Goal for the Group."

The document was used as evidence in court when in 2007 the Justice Department convicted the largest Islamic charity in the country, called "The Holy Land Foundation."

The charity was founded in California in 1989 and provided aid to a number of Palestinian causes. It also offered help to refugee communities in Jordan, Lebanon and other needy people across the Middle East and the rest of the world.

As the charity grew and revenue increased, claims emerged against the foundation, and finally the Justice Department stepped in.

The memorandum that was uncovered spells out their plan:

“The process of settlement is a ‘Civilization-Jihadist Process’ with all the word means. The Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood) must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and “sabotaging” its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God’s religion is made victorious over all other religions.”

This master plan includes ways to destabilize America by influencing the media, and creating and utilizing different organizations throughout the country, including the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) – which has ties to radical Islam.

It was uncovered that this organization, “The Holy Land Foundation,” had been channeling more than \$12 million into known terrorist organizations in the Middle East, including the Palestinian terrorist group, Hamas.

Their 50-year goal is the United States of *Islamic* America. They like to use terms like “Islamophobia, xenophobia, and racism” to shut down any dialogue or discussion of the problem, the Quran, Islam and terrorism. That creates a twofold problem: It makes it next to impossible for moderates to reform Islam, and it makes it hard for the average person to know what is causing the problem and how to solve it.

“Violent Sharia Law teaches hate against Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Atheists, Dogs, Gays, the West, Western: food, democracy, civilization, cultures, countries and nations; and after our Caliphs invaded them all, we have the audacity and nerve to complain about “Islamophobia”.”

~ Imam Tawhidi

Just a few days before completing this book, the CIA has released something like 460,000 documents that were captured in the raid that killed Osama Bin Laden. What I thought was interesting is that in these documents (in Bin Laden’s own handwriting), he said that he joined the Saudi branch of the Muslim brotherhood while he was in high school. Here again is the Muslim brotherhood influencing and mentoring probably the most famous terrorist in all of human history at this point, Osama Bin Laden

Dr. Ben Carson, a retired neurosurgeon and Republican candidate for president, appeared on the Mark Levin Show in 2016, and sounded the alarm bells. He spoke openly about the threat of domestic Islamist groups that pose as moderate organizations. He warned that the US could be caught asleep on their watch.

“They said in that document that it would be particularly easy to carry out ‘civilization jihad’ in America” Carson said, “because our people would be so silly and... protecting the rights of the very people who are trying to subvert our system, to their own expense,” (Schachtel, 2016)

I think it’s important that people become aware of what is really going on behind the scenes, and right under our noses, in order to safeguard our future. It is only through remaining vigilant and shining a light on these groups, that we have a chance to avert this threat.

This is why it is important to me to follow and stay up to date on world events. It’s important for all of us to understand the threats we

are facing. For example, I follow the organization started by former FBI counterterrorism agent, John Guandolo, called Understanding the Threat (www.understandingthethreat.com).

While UTT briefs and teaches about many of the threats external and internal to the United States, its primary concern is the threats to the Republic and the West in general from the Global Islamic Movement.

“It is truly astounding to watch newscasters continue to ask the question ‘WHY?’” Guandolo told the *Washington Times*, “Why did they do this? What will it take for the U.S. media and American leadership to face the reality of the imposing danger breathing down our necks the global Islamic Movement? These men did this because they are commanded to. The global jihad is on.” (Scarborough, 2013)

With so much emotion, so many opinions, and so much misinformation, it pays to know the facts.

This was the mission that Chris Allen Gaubatz, who you can follow on twitter @CAIRvGaubatz undertook when he infiltrated the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a U.S. Muslim Brotherhood entity, by becoming an intern. His undercover research was then featured in the book, *Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld that's Conspiring to Islamize America*.

It was an incredibly difficult infiltration, because on the surface, these people are reasonable, well-spoken, and likeable. With a straight face they speak of peace and reason. Underneath the façade, though, the organization is pure Muslim Brotherhood.

In an interview with Clarion, he said:

“I was surprised at how much I learned about propaganda, lawfare and media manipulation while performing research as an intern in CAIR-National. They are masters of media manipulation, working to

control the opinion of the 7% of the electorate in our democracy that is involved politically. It shows.

Liberty is the one concept that can unite us against the Islamist machine that is the Muslim Brotherhood. I will use everything I learned at CAIR and my experience throughout my life to expose the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood as long as there is a Muslim Brotherhood.” (Svirsky, 2013)

Let’s put some of these ideas into context:

There were 1.8 billion Muslims in the world as of 2015 – roughly 24% of the global population.

According to a Pew Research Center estimate, there are about 2.05 million Muslim adults in America, and that a majority of them (58%) are immigrants. (Lipka, 2017)

The majority of Islam is peaceful, and relatively tolerant, but even if only 5% are radical extremists – meaning they would kill without a second thought, that’s still 90 million people all over the world.

The Muslim Brotherhood rose to power in Egypt in 2012, and Brotherhood members across the region thought that their time had come. However, since then, many Muslim Brotherhood leaders and members have been imprisoned, and the organization has now been banned in several countries, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

In June 2013 we saw the world’s largest protest in all of human history, as millions upon millions of people flooded the streets of Cairo, Alexandria, and other parts of Egypt, demanding that the radical Islamic state come to an end and to protest against President Mohamed Morsi – who many believed was a mere pawn in the hands of the Brotherhood.

The Gaurdian reported that “some senior members of the Muslim Brotherhood spent the day travelling, fearing for their safety. Morsi

himself moved from Itahadiya to the Quba palace, a state building in a safer part of Cairo.” It wasn’t long before the military stepped in to try to control the biggest mass action in the history of the planet.

The uprising came at the end of seven months of protests that started when the Morsi government issued a highly controversial draft constitution that gave him sweeping unlimited powers over the state’s judicial system. What was supposed to be a democratic government had turned radical. The demonstrations started peacefully, but soon turned violent when the headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood were stormed in Mokattam in Cairo and when 5 members of the organization were killed.

It was clear that the general population of Egypt would not stand for the radical takeover of their country – and it is a sentiment that is shared by millions of people in the Arab world, and further abroad too.

It brings to mind the events of 1979, when more than 100,000 people took to the streets in Iran to demonstrate their displeasure over the law forcing women to wear the hijab. The protest grew and spread to neighboring regions, but ultimately it came to nothing. Women in those areas are required to wear the hijab, or face severe penalties.

It often happens that when the anti-ISIS troops liberate an area from ISIS control, the women will tear off, celebrate and burn their burkas as a symbol of their newfound freedom.

The Muslim Brotherhood is now classified as a terrorist organization in Egypt, Russia, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates. So far the US has not followed suit, even though there are many who are calling for it.

Fortunately there are also those who are working to correct the balance.

Brave and forward-thinking Muslim women such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Yasmine Mohamed are starting conversations, and challenging the validity of extremist beliefs. They believe in a peaceful version of Islam – and they agree that Islam needs a Reformation. They are two of the most forceful and provocative feminist critics challenging Islam today, and their lives are at risk because of what they are saying.

In her book, *Heretic*, Hirsi Ali says there are three things that Muslims need to re-think: sex, money, and violence.

Ayaan was born in 1969 in Mogadishu, Somalia. Her father was a forward-thinking man, who studied abroad, but that kind of thing was not welcome in her hometown. When her father was imprisoned, her grandmother gave permission for the 5-year-old Ayaan to undergo female genital mutilation – or “circumcision.”

She fled to Kenya, where she gained a deep understanding of the radical Muslim movement, and then later to the Netherlands, to escape an arranged marriage with a man she hated.

Hirsi Ali argued that “Islam” means submission or obedience, not just of women but men similarly. “It seems to the outsider that boys have more freedom than girls, but they really don’t.”

As a young girl she had a massive hierarchy to contend with, of parents and clan and what she calls “bearded men preaching seventh-century laws.” She had to adapt from a “collectivist society” to an “individualist society” in Holland. “Finding the ability to say No, and feeling OK about it in my conscience, was a real emancipation for me.” And she has kept on saying no ever since.

(Martin, 2017)

In Europe she worked with people seeking asylum, and finally moved into politics.

She rose rapidly through the ranks of Dutch politics before becoming the Netherlands' most strident opponent of Islam and a target for radical Islamists.

"Things I say and do don't have to fit into a political manifesto," she said. "The way I see my role is to make people understand that the wonderful Western idea of multiculturalism and political correctness is counterproductive. It works to help them [the radical Islamists]. So we have to abandon that."

Hirsi Ali believes that the antidote to the infiltration of political Islam in the Western world is a strong civil society that educates people about the threat it poses. She is also positive about changes happening in the Middle East, where protests and the rise of young people who don't want sharia have brought about changes in some countries.

I couldn't agree more. The solution comes down to educating people about what is going on, and offering alternatives. That's a big part of the reason why I've gone to such lengths to include this topic in the book.

"Since we [western leaders] have officially refused to link violent extremism to its roots in Islam, we have pretty much made a choice not to want to understand the problem." She said, and I think that really gets at the most important issue.

The forces at work in our liberal, democratic West, including its political leaders and also western Muslims, have made a dangerous mistake in insisting that the rise of Islamist terrorism has nothing to do with Islam.

She argues that the notion that the "root causes" of Islamist violence are simply just issues like poverty and corrupt governments, and insists that we need to consider the texts of Islam. She points out that many Muslim-majority countries, such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia,

insist on a rigid form of sharia law, which is totally incompatible with western notions of individual freedom and religious tolerance.

In her 2015 book, *Heretic*, which I would encourage you to read, she said, “we are at war with Islam,” and called it “a destructive, nihilistic cult of death.”

And she’s not the only one. All over the world, freethinking people with backgrounds in Islam are raising their voices, calling for moderation and a peaceful resolution to the problems.

Another activist is Maajid Nawaz. Born to a British Pakistani family, Nawaz is a former member of the Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir. This association led to his arrest in Egypt in December 2001, where he remained locked up until 2006.

While he was imprisoned, he read books on human rights and interacted with Amnesty International, which adopted him as a prisoner of conscience, and it resulted in a change of heart.

This led Nawaz to leave Hizb-ut-Tahrir in 2007, renounce his Islamist past and call for a “Secular Islam.” He wrote an autobiography entitled *Radical*, in 2012 – another important book to read, and he is now a regular writer, and speaker on the subject – even becoming an advisor to Prime Minister Cameron.

He continues to denounce radical Islam, and constantly warns about the infiltration of these groups into western society.

In Canada, Tarek Fatah has been doing the same thing for years. He was born in 1949 in Karachi, Pakistan, and became an investigative journalist for Pakistan Television. He was imprisoned twice by military regimes, and charged with sedition by the General Zia-ul Haq regime. He left Pakistan and settled in Saudi Arabia, before emigrating to Canada in 1987.

He became a lone voice in the Muslim world regarding gay rights.

"The issue that has resulted in all the threats and allegations against us is our support for same-sex marriage. It's the central point on which the Muslim Canadian Congress and I have faced outright hostility, verging on violence. There is near unanimity in any religious group that this is the ultimate sin and, for them, this amounts to the ultimate betrayal."

Fatah said that, "Our human rights cannot revolve around religion. It's not about our rights, it's about human rights."

Shireen Qudosi is another outspoken voice on these issues – perhaps one of the best known. She is an American Muslim writer whose articles have been featured in The Middle East Forum, Fox, BBC, Australia's Radio National, NewsMax and Breitbart, to mention only a few.

She points to the origins of Islam, in order to understand the situation the world is in today:

"So when Islam was originally birthed, it was all about peace in the first 12 years. After that, the Prophet Mohammed waged his jihad campaigns, which is where you see the justification for today's radicals. And so it's both peace and war.

After the Prophet's death, it became very politicized. It became the system of Islam, rather than the religion or faith of Islam. So that's really where it became incredibly warmongering. We had the Caliph of Islam launching campaigns, we had inter-tribal wars, civil wars. So to say that it is just peace is a complete farce."

She said there was "an entire subculture of moderate Muslims who are speaking out on social media, who are finding avenues to connect with other moderates, and other critical thinkers":

"We just need the support. So if, on a national level, we see an administration coming in that is supportive of minority voices in

Islam, is supportive of critical free thinking, that's what it's going to take to get us to come out and be more secure.”

(Hayward, 2016)

What I love about her is the courage she has to question absolutely everything. There should be no questions that we are not allowed to ask. The way to resolve the tension is through open expression, and freedom of speech.

These are some signs that there is hope for an open discussion about the problems. On the other hand, there is still a lot of hate-speak in circulation. But the reality is the solution must be a Muslim solution to the civil war that is raging in Islam. Muslims must be the ones to reform their religion with the help and support from peace loving humans everywhere. We're all in this together. Our fates are tied.

Brigitte Gabriel is another very outspoken public voice on this issue. She was born in Lebanon to a Christian couple. She recalls that during the Lebanese Civil War, Islamic militants launched an assault on a Lebanese military base near her family's house and destroyed her home.

Gabriel, who was ten years old at the time, was injured by shrapnel in the attack. She and her parents were forced to live underground in all that remained, an 8-by-10-foot bomb shelter for seven years, with only a small kerosene heater, no sanitary systems, no electricity or running water, and little food. She had to crawl in a roadside ditch to a spring for water to evade Muslim snipers.

Beirut Lebanon used to be considered the “Paris” of the Middle East, with quaint roadside cafés and a bustling, thriving society. Brigitte was there when Lebanon was beautiful, secular and peaceful. All the Muslims and Christians and Jewish people all got along. And then when the radical Islamists moved in, it completely changed. When Islamic forces came in, all that changed, and Gabriel's family had to flee.

When she was 13 years old, the radical Islamists started saying they were going to invade the part of the neighborhood where they were living, and they were going to kill all the Christians there. Some of the Christian fighters had come to her parents and warned them of an attack one night, saying they were pretty sure they would not be able to repel the attack and that they were all going to be killed.

What was really emotional about it was Brigitte telling the story and saying things like, “These people were our neighbors, we had parties with them, we celebrated birthdays together, we went to school together, we went over to each other’s houses and literally almost from one moment to the next, these went from our friends, our neighbors, we broke bread together, to literally trying to kill them.”

After these fighters had told their parents that they didn’t think they were going to make it once the radical Islamists invaded that night, her mother told her they were probably all going to die and that she should put her best dress on because if we’re all going to die tonight, at least we can die looking our best. And it was horrible to say something like that to your 13 year old daughter. “If the worst comes just start running towards Israel.” It’s really emotional powerful stuff that a 13 year old experienced, hiding in the basement, dodging sniper fire.

The extremists would randomly put up these checkpoints and if you and your family didn’t have the documentation that said that your religion was non-Muslim, and they caught you, they would pull you out of the car and murder you in the street.

Her public speeches are intelligent, and her well-directed arguments tend to stimulate some criticism – but at least people are talking about the issues that matter. In reply to her critics, Gabriel says:

"I am not anti-Muslim, I am anti ideologies which want to kill free people and subjugate them right now, in the name of the Islamic religion. I would fight with the same passion if crazy Christians were

trying to do that, if crazy Jews were trying to do that, or whatever crazy religious is trying to do that. I am for the human spirit and for the individuality of the human spirit." (Wikipedia, 2017)

That really gets to the root of the problem – it's an ideological war, and it is easy to confuse violence and aggression with religion. No matter what belief system is at work – people need to be freed from the oppression and hateful tyranny of those that would subjugate them.

It calls to mind the atrocities we saw during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, which had nothing to do with Islam, and the story of another woman speaking out against radical ideologies: Immaculée Ilibagiza.

She was featured on one of Wayne Dyer's PBS programs, where she described the terror of those times in Rwanda, and she also wrote the book *Left to Tell*, which goes into her experiences.

Hidden along with seven other women, she survived for 91 days in a small bathroom, no larger than 3 feet by 4 feet. The bathroom was concealed in a room behind a wardrobe in the home of a Hutu pastor. During the genocide, most of Ilibagiza's family (her mother, her father, and her two brothers Damascene and Vianney) were killed by Hutu Interahamwe soldiers.

Ilibagiza shares in her book and interviews how her Roman Catholic faith guided her through her ordeal and describes her eventual forgiveness and compassion toward her family's killers.

Imagine being able to forgive, from the heart, the people that massacred your family! Hers is a voice that needs to be heard.

A similar story comes from Nadia Murad – who at the tender age of 24 is now a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, a UN human rights spokeswoman and activist.

She was born in the village of Kocho, Iraq to a family of Yazidi farmers. One day Islamic State fighters rounded up the Yazidi community in the village killing 600 people – including six of Nadia's family members – and taking the younger women into slavery. She was held as a sex slave in the city of Mosul, beaten, burned with cigarettes, and raped when trying to escape. Nadia was able to escape after her captor left the house unlocked. She was taken in by a neighboring family who were able to smuggle her out of the Islamic State controlled area, and since then she has been speaking out about what is happening in the region.

She appeared on CNN along with her counsel, international human rights lawyer Amal Clooney (the wife of George Clooney), and told her story:

"They sold girls, girls that were underage, because ISIS considered that permissible under Islamic law," Murad said. "They came not just to attack certain people, but they came for all Yazidis."

The violence against the Yazidi community continues to this day, said Clooney, who represents Murad. Around 3,000 Yazidis are believed to remain in captivity, some of them from Murad's own family. (King, 2017)

These brave people are speaking out, from personal experience, about the kinds of things that are happening in their home countries, and in the rest of the world. We need to take heed of their words of warning, and not hide our heads under the sand.

Part of the problem with Obama letting ISIS grow unrestricted, and not stopping their spread across the Middle East, is that it sent a message of weakness to the enemy – it gave them legitimacy, and made them credible: "The infidel is totally blinded, Islam will conquer the world." Tens of thousands of people from Europe in the Western world bought into their slick high quality propaganda, and started supporting their ideology online, and even going to join their

Caliphate. Now that the Caliphate has fallen and its remnants are on the verge of being wiped out, the credibility is gone. Think about all the lives that have been ruined and lost because of that.

Most countries in the world have millions of Muslims as citizens – and some of them follow the extremist Wahhabi version. The Quran is a complex book, one that scholars can study for years. You can read it and choose to see it as full of love and acceptance, or you can read it and be incited to jihad. The first ten years of Mohammed's teaching, he only had a handful of followers. That all changed when war came into the picture, when it suddenly swelled in popularity. The latter half of the Quran focuses more on that.

There's a very interesting book on the bestseller lists right now: *Mohammed's Koran: Why Muslims Kill For Islam*, by Peter McLoughlin and Tommy Robinson. They say that their book makes it perfectly clear that Islam is a religion of war and conquest, and that this is precisely how Islam was viewed in the West, right up until thousands of innocent Americans were wiped out on 9/11. The radicals say Islam is a religion of war and conquest themselves.

The book also contains an entire Quran, decrypted by placing the parts into chronological order. It demonstrates that Islam was a failure until Mohammed started to make killing unbelievers an act of worship within Islam, and explains why so much terrorism comes from the small minority who are extreme Muslims.

It's important to understand that a large portion of the Muslim world lives in dire poverty, and in many areas people don't have access to education, except from the traditional leaders in the mosques.

They memorize portions of the Quran, but cannot interpret it using their own personal frame of reference. The significance of those words are always interpreted by the religious elite, and people's minds are filled with whatever ideas they hear. They are at the mercy

of the morals and values of the preacher and what resides in their heart.

During the Middle and Dark Ages, most of Europe was in the same situation with the Christian church. It was corrupt, and knowledge was carefully kept away from people. People were told what to believe, and nothing else was allowed. The aristocracy and the nobility got to misuse the power that was in their hands for safekeeping, and the general population always got the worst of it. Those in power paid the clergy to gloss over their sins and indulgences.

“Authority that does not exist for liberty is not authority but force.”

~ Lord Acton

When you have a population that is illiterate, uneducated, ignorant, and in a lot of cases, with a low IQ – they have no way of learning how to understand what is in the Quran. They’re taught by an authority figure and an expert that certain groups of people should be hated, and other groups of people should be your role models – then you get tyranny, manipulation, and extremism. That’s what we’re seeing.

It’s important to understand it, and to talk about it. If you don’t tow the politically correct line of the politicians, and follow the unwritten rules of the media, you get labeled as a racist and an Islamophobe when you try to understand why the problem is growing instead of receding into history.

The only way to solve it is to talk about it. My mission is to give people the information that enables them to take control of their lives, and design their lifestyle the way they want it. We all must make politics our part time profession so we can understand our collective

problems and elect those who can actually solve them with win / win solutions.

One of the things I appreciate about President Trump is that he has given breathing room to the moderates, so we can openly talk about these things, and move towards an intelligent solution. Tiptoeing around a problem is never going to solve it.

What's interesting is that when he visited Saudi Arabia, and attended the opening of the anti-terrorism center, Toby Keith went and played a concert there. The king of Saudi Arabia is also now talking about loosening the cultural restrictions on women – such as allowing them to drive, and loosening the male guardianship laws. Right now a woman can't do much on her own, and women are not allowed to leave the house without a male guardian. However, as of this writing, the king has just issued decrees allowing women to drive and loosening the male guardianship laws.

On Tuesday, October 24, 2017 during an interview with Maria Bartiromo, Mohammad bin Salman, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, its current Defense Minister and future king stated, “Saudi Arabia was not like this prior to 1979. Saudi Arabia and the entire region had the awakening project spread after 79’... We only want to go back to what we were, the moderate Islam that is open to the world, open to all the religions. 70% of the Saudi people are less than 30 years old, and quite frankly, we will not waste 30 years of our lives in dealing with extremist ideas. We will destroy them today. We want to live a normal life, a life that translates our moderate religion, our good customs... I believe that we will eradicate the rest of extremism very soon.”

Skeptics of Mohammad bin Salman, will say that it's all talk and that the Saudi's won't actually follow through with the reformation of Islam and the opening up and religious moderation of their society.

It's always best to look at what people do and not what they say. To as Ronald Reagan said to do, "Trust, but verify."

It's in all of our collective interests to make sure that the Muslim moderates have the safety, security, space, strength and support of all peace loving human beings so they can successfully accomplish the long overdue Islamic Reformation.

These are small baby steps – to be sure – but they are positive steps.

The good news is that the truth is slowly getting out. The Internet and social media are helping people to know more about life in other parts of the world so we can understand how our destinies are all connected and intertwined.

"Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day."

~ Thomas Jefferson

America's Role as Peacekeeper

James Mattis is a retired United States Marine Corps general and was selected by Trump to be the 26th United States Secretary of Defense. He earned quite a reputation, both among the Marine Corps, and in the news Media, and he is one of the most outspoken and uncompromising leaders our country has seen.

He is loved by conservatives and liberals alike, and he earned the title: "Warrior Monk," and "Mad Dog Mattis." He truly embodies the warrior ethos that there is no better friend and no worse enemy than a member of the United States Armed Forces.

"Find the enemy that wants to end this experiment (in American democracy) and kill every one of them until they're so sick of the killing that they leave us and our freedoms intact."

~ General James Mattis, US Secretary of Defense.

Perhaps what people admire about him most is his ability to call a spade a spade. "You cannot allow any of your people to avoid the brutal facts. If they start living in a dream world, it's going to be bad." He said, making it clear that complacency, or a lack of vigilance is what gets Marines killed.

His approach to the conflict in the Middle East is equally uncompromising:

"I come in peace. I didn't bring artillery. But I'm pleading with you, with tears in my eyes: If you fuck with me, I'll kill you all. The reality of the situation is that our peace-keeping forces need to be respected and feared if they are to be effective in their goal."

~ James Mattis, US Secretary of Defense

Keeping the peace in a war zone requires more than empty words, in the opinion of Mattis.

In the dark days immediately after 9/11, the CIA turned to a man by the name of Dr. James Mitchell to help craft an interrogation program designed to elicit intelligence from just-captured top Al Qaeda leaders and terror suspects.

Mitchell wrote a very interesting book, *Enhanced Interrogation: Inside the Minds and Motives of the Islamic Terrorists Trying To Destroy America*.

Mitchell talks about personally questioning thirteen of the most senior high-value detainees in U.S. custody, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind behind the September 11, 2001, terror attacks.

Khalid talked to Mitchell during interrogation about the two-pronged attack strategy of his organization. One prong is the strong military attack on the armed forces, which he admits is not enough to win the war. The other prong is a much more sinister, under the radar, infiltration into Western society. Muslim immigration is placing operatives right in the target countries, where Muslim couples are encouraged to have plenty of children, in order to increase the number of Muslim citizens in other countries. A recent demographics study confirmed that it is happening:

“In the next half century or so, Christianity’s long reign as the world’s largest religion may come to an end, according to a just-released report that builds on Pew Research Center’s original population growth projections for religious groups. Indeed, Muslims will grow more than twice as fast as the overall world population between 2015 and 2060 and, in the second half of this century, will likely surpass Christians as the world’s largest religious group.

The main reasons for Islam’s growth ultimately involve simple demographics. To begin with, Muslims have more children than members of the seven other major religious groups analyzed in the study. Muslim women have an average of 2.9 children, significantly

above the next-highest group (Christians at 2.6) and the average of all non-Muslims (2.2). In all major regions where there is a sizable Muslim population, Muslim fertility exceeds non-Muslim fertility.”

(Lipka, 2017)

Khalid said that the long-term plan is to populate the globe with Muslim people, and influence the constitutions and governments of different countries all over the world.

Enhanced Interrogation argues that it is necessary for America to take strong measures to defend itself from its enemies and that the country is less safe now without them than it was before 9/11.

In 2007 when the war was going badly, President Bush fired Secretary Rumsfeld, and hired Bob Gates, the former director of the CIA to turn the war around. General Petraeus led the surge, and worked to turn the war around. This was the time I got interested in reading Michael Yon, and I’ve followed him for about a decade now.

One of the smart things that Obama did when he came to power was to keep Bob Gates on staff for three years. Then Ben Rhodes came into the picture – a man with very little experience in government – and became one of the President’s chief advisors, and speechwriters. He was so close to the head of the country that he once said he didn’t know where he ended and the President started. He and Obama had a “mind-meld,” as he put it.

It’s pretty common knowledge that Obama didn’t trust the military, and he was constantly suspicious of it. When the military wanted to keep the number of troops on the ground in large numbers, Obama said no.

Once America had clamped down on all the violent attacks in the area, we were able to bring peace to Iraq. We were the strongest tribe, and the peacekeepers.

Obama's Secretaries of Defense, Gates and Leon Panetta, made it clear what would happen if America were to pull out of the conflict, because without the stabilizing force on the ground, things would revert back to chaos. The trouble, and the bloodshed would start all over again.

Rhodes, an unqualified and inexperienced voice in the conflict, advised differently. He urged Obama to just leave, convinced that the US was acting as a bully in the war, and that democracy would spontaneously flourish in the area as soon as the troops were pulled out. Panetta and Gates were overruled – something each of them talk about in their books – and both eventually resigned from office.

Obama was going to do what he wanted to do anyway, and withdraw the troops. He believed his own press, that he was infallible. He wanted the Iraqi parliament to give our troops a blanket immunity, which his advisors said would never pass parliament. As it turned out, the whole thing devolved into a giant tragedy and clusterfuck of epic proportions. Before we knew what was happening, ISIS was basically on the doorstep of Baghdad. To Obama's credit, he sent the troops back to prevent Baghdad from falling. Still, he really didn't give the military the means to do what they needed to do. He kept their hands mostly tied behind their backs.

As a result so many atrocities were committed by ISIS.

The Yezidis are a Kurdish speaking religious minority. Their religion, Yazidism is linked to ancient Mesopotamian religions and combines aspects of Zoroastrianism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism, and it is a very old and noble culture. ISIS, however, viewed these people as worshipers of the devil, and murdered them in a mass genocide. They marched thousands of men and old ladies into the desert, and beheaded, stabbed and / or shot them. The boys were drafted into brainwashing, war training, and they were turned into suicide bombers. The women and young girls were made sex slaves.

Afterwards, Yazidi survivors told of their horrific lives as ISIS sex slaves after they were caught and held as prisoners by the terror group.

“One woman revealed how women would be pushed up against a wall as jihadis would make their way down the line groping their chests.

If they had breasts, they were sent to be raped, but if they did not they were thrown aside for three months before suffering the same ordeal again.” (Davies, 2017)

Taking sex slaves is a common thing in these organizations, and the brutality is enough to make your blood run cold. It was reported that young girls who resisted rape had their tongues nailed to wooden tables in order to stop them resisting. These are the realities of what happens on the ground in places like this. Obama collected the yes-men around him, and allowed it to happen. The military were enraged, because this is exactly what they had warned him about. They knew withdrawing from Iraq was a mistake. Unfortunately, just like President Bush before him, Obama was inexperienced, and made some epic blunders in managing a complex situation.

No matter which way you look at it, it was a tragedy.

People will not change their belief system, or world-view until they are proven wrong – and that is usually painful.

Unfortunately with Iraq, it wasn't until all of this death and destruction, plus the mass migration of fighters and sleeper cells into Europe and the Western world, that ended with the terrorist attacks in Paris and Belgium, that people started to realize the mistake. ISIS openly taunted the West, saying that they had sent tens of thousands of soldiers into other countries, hidden among the refugees and migrants. It wasn't long before air travel was suddenly a high risk, with countries desperately trying to stop the influx – but it was too late.

In 2015 Time magazines ‘most influential photo of the year’ was of the body of a three-year-old Syrian boy washed up on the Turkish coastline. The boy’s name was Alan Kurdi, and the heartbreaking photos soon made it to the world news headlines, and went viral online. His family had been trying to flee the turmoil in the Middle East, and were headed for Europe, like so many others before and after them.

When the Turkish photographer came upon the beach, she said in a recent interview it was like a “children’s graveyard.” She took photos of Alan’s lifeless body. Alan’s body had washed up along the shore, half in the sand and half in the water. His sneakers were still on his feet.

In death, Alan became a symbol of all the children who lost their lives trying to reach safety in Europe and the West, and he was the face of the biggest story of 2015.

As heartbreaking as those images were – they served as a kind of wake up call to the world. We cannot ignore what is happening to innocent human beings, and we cannot turn a blind eye to the activities of these terrorist organizations.

What does it say about us as human beings if we can simply look away, and pretend that it never happened?

Why do we not give a fuck? How can we go about our day-to-day problems, allowing these things to go on?

“The price good men pay for indifference to public affairs is to be ruled by evil men.”

~ Plato

Humanity has to deal with groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and other radicals. As long as the ideologies of ISIS and radical Islam are allowed to spread and fester, the threats will remain.

We need to delegitimize the ideology of groups like the Islamic State and other radicals.

Sebastian Gorka, a former advisor to President Trump, has this definition of victory:

“We will have won when the black flag of jihad, when the black flag of ISIS, is as repugnant across the world as the white peaked hood of the Ku Klux Klan and the black, white, and red swastika of Hitler’s Third Reich.” (Siegel, 2017)

It’s an ideological battlefield.

Iraqi politicians likewise had to change their thinking when ISIS flooded their country and took over. After all that terror and bloodshed, they realized the benefit of having the US military on their side, advising, and mentoring their troops.

It’s the same reason that the US military never left Europe, or Japan after the Second World War. The original Marshall Plan was an American initiative that led to the recovery of Europe after the Second World War, and saw Washington invest \$12 billion to help rebuild western European economies.

They stayed on to help rebuild the society that was ruined by war, and to help engineer the rebuilding process.

Interestingly, former senior US general, John Allen outlined just such a plan for the Middle East, and he is not alone in thinking this way.

"The trajectory we're on is not promising," said General Allen, "We're going to have to think differently about how we're going to solve these issues, otherwise we are going to be condemned to interminable conflict and that should not be what we bequeath our children."

General Allen compared the present day Middle East conflict with the Cold War, which he said was ended by the impact of the Marshall

Plan. "The knockout blow came from something that wasn't military," he said. "It was the Marshall Plan and we are hearing more and more leaders around the world recognizing that to really deal with an organization like ISIL and its related extremist mutations we have to deal with the underlying social, economic and political circumstances that have festered for so long and have created such animosity within local populations that the radicalization is simply interminable. We have got to deal with that or we can never deal with extremist organizations except in a military manner and that's not a winning proposition." He said the aim was to remove the conditions that made populations vulnerable to radicalization, providing a generation-long push for government reform and job creation. (Crilly, 2016)

It's interesting to compare the Japanese Kamikaze warriors who did suicide bomb runs in their Zeros on the US navy – to the suicide bombers in the Middle East. For the Kamikazes, their reward would be in the afterlife, because they died defending the homeland of Japan, for the emperor who was considered by the Japanese people to be God incarnate. Sound familiar?

Japanese culture is very different, though. The Japanese ethos of quality and dedication is something to be admired. Dr. Edward Deming helped instill the focus on quality into Japanese society, business and industry after the war. During the 1970's and 1980's Japan made huge progress – coming from basically a devastated and destroyed society where the majority of every major city was destroyed during World War II, to becoming a world leader and economic powerhouse. They started producing smaller cars, better, and cheaper products than the ones produced in America.

It is in our collective interest to make sure everybody on earth has a stable society, a stable government, and money supply. We need to instill and secure the values, tenets and principles of liberty, personal responsibility and self-reliance, and access to the Internet. We need to enable and empower people with tools, access to information and

the ability to develop their skills to earn a living, and have a good life.

People will continue to flee oppressive regimes, and keep sneaking into Europe and America. It's numerically impossible for us to support them. We need to help them where they are, and give them the infrastructure they need to thrive, no matter where they live in the world. There's a great video on the topic of immigration and why we must help people where they live instead of bringing them to the west, that you can watch on YouTube by Roy Beck, titled, "World Poverty, Immigration & Gumballs." It is numerically impossible to make much of a difference to reduce world poverty through immigration.

His basic argument is that we have 5.6 billion desperately poor people in the world. That grows every year by 80 million people. These people are earning less than \$2 a day.

The US takes in (legally) about 1 million immigrants each year, and that is already a strain on the economy, and the infrastructure. Subtract out 1 million immigrants to the US each year, and you're not making a difference to the overall problem.

Even that small percentage of legal immigrants tend to be people that are naturally entrepreneurial – they're coming to the US to make it. The ones earning less than \$2 a day can't afford to get here.

Surely it makes sense to help those people where they are, instead of pretending that we're making an impact on world poverty by increasing the number of people we let in. The real heroes are the entrepreneurs, the movers and shakers, and the ones who start projects for improvement on their own home turf.

Bill Gates recently echoed exactly the same ideas, and warned of the danger of letting too many migrants into Europe. The Gates foundation, as everybody knows, has spent many years, and many millions of dollars providing aid to impoverished people in Africa.

Speaking in an interview with the German *Welt am Sonntag* newspaper, he said: “On the one hand you want to demonstrate generosity and take in refugees. But the more generous you are, the more word gets around about this — which in turn motivates more people to leave Africa. Germany cannot possibly take in the huge number of people who are wanting to make their way to Europe.”

A better way to approach the problem is to understand that we need to change people’s minds – we need to uplift them as people, as thinking beings, and as worthy members of the human race.

This is really the only way that I see us creating a brotherhood of man. It cannot be forced – you can’t compel people to do it. They need to want it. It’s an ideological struggle – a battle to free the minds of people.

People with the mindset of scarcity are always going to live at a disadvantage. They can’t get a job, they can’t earn enough to eat, or find a partner – and that makes them more susceptible to fall into a life of crime. To get what they need by force because they don’t have a better way. Wealthy people don’t think and behave in the same way – because they simply don’t need to. The challenge is to create a mindset of abundance all over the planet, and empower people to create change where they are for themselves instead of what we have now, where most of us are simply indifferent to the suffering of our fellow brothers and sisters since it does not appear to affect us directly.

“The highest spiritual truth is that We Are All One, and the lowest human impulse is to separate ourselves into groups of Us and Them.” ~ Neale Donald Walsch

We need to help give people in the Third World access to resources, information and technology. We need to help them to become self-reliant, if we ever want to see the end of crime, violence, tyranny,

poverty and extremism. What does it say about us as a society, our humanity, if we continue to simply not give a fuck?

As a final thought on this subject, I want to share something that I think all of us in the west should contemplate on a daily basis:

When you wake up in the morning, be grateful for and spend a few moments in silent thought to Honor those who have died so that you can wake up today in peace and have the choice and the chance to make your life and your part of the world a little better and a little more like the way you want it to be.

Finding a Positive Purpose in Life

“For what is the best choice, for each individual is the highest it is possible for him to achieve.”

~ Aristotle

When you’re doing what you love to do, each and every day, life seems meaningful and worthwhile. When you get the sense that the flow of your life is aligned to something higher and deeper than yourself, a kind of fresh energy enters your life.

So many people struggle to find their own personal groove – and as I mentioned earlier in the book, a big part of my work is helping people to discover their own purpose in life – the highest that it is possible to achieve.

Think of it this way: If you didn’t need a job, if you didn’t have to earn money – what would you choose to spend your life doing?

Once you are able to fully answer that question – then the next obvious thing that comes up is – so why aren’t you doing it? Why aren’t you working to make it a reality? What’s holding you back?

It’s never easy – and it’s not meant to be easy – but at some point we all have to realize that we have a limited time to discover our true purpose, and more importantly, to live up to it.

“There comes a time when you ought to start doing what you want. Take a job that you love. You will jump out of bed in the morning. I think you are out of your mind if you keep taking jobs that you don’t like because you think it will look good on your resume. Isn’t that a little like saving up sex for your old age?”

~ Warren Buffett

A life Coach is someone who helps people – and therefore, if you want to teach people about self-actualization, you need to have gone some way towards mastering yourself first. You have to be self-reliant on your own first. If you want to coach people in life, you need to achieve some success in your own life first.

I see young people leaving college, wanting to become a Life Coach – with zero actual life experience under their belt. How can you relate to someone who is experiencing problems in life if you haven't struggled yet, if you haven't overcome your own challenges, and grown from them?

Just like successful football coaches, who focus on the fundamentals of the game – a life coach is supposed to teach people about the fundamental life skills that lead to success – whether it's in relationships, business – or any other area of life.

It's a process, and a discipline. It's more than sharing basic common sense or repeating clichés.

Sustained discipline is the key to success.

The changes people make need to be *lifestyle* changes, not just temporary fads, or experiments. It means creating new rituals. For example, with healthy eating, it means changing what you consistently eat, not just eating healthy once or twice. It means eating to live, and not living to eat. My diet choices give me energy, focus, and enable the kind of life I want. It's not something you do for a while, and then give up. If you stop going to the gym once you've built some muscle, the muscles will soon be gone – they need to be maintained.

When I write articles and shoot my videos – those are my baseline fundamentals of my work every day. When I'm not working on that, I'm continually reading, learning and being inspired – in order to better help other people. I want to know what is happening in the world, and I want to help where I can offer something of value that

can change people's lives for the better – and that's also why I talk about such a wide range of subjects – helping people to understand them, and showing them what the potential solutions to these problems are.

It is really an ongoing fight for most people – the fight to be who you truly are, fighting to live the way you want, to live your life in your own way, without being told what to do or how to behave, or think, which words are ok, and which are not ok.

“Self-actualizing people must be what they can be.”

~ Dr. Wayne Dyer

A must read for any serious student of self-reliance and self-actualization is, “The Power of Intention” by Dr. Wayne Dyer. There is a video and a book; you should get both. There is also an audio series titled, “Secrets of the Power of Intention” you should also get. He's been a huge influence in my life as you may have noticed by now.

What drives me? I have to be able to live the way I want to. I have to be able to wake up and work when I want to. I have to be able to do the kind of work I want to. I have to live near the beach, near the water, and dress the way I want to. As Aristotle said – The best choice is the highest we can achieve.

Success is being able to spend your life in your own way.

When I was working at the sports bar, I hated every second of it – but I knew I would make it back to where I wanted to be eventually. As I've changed career paths, I have always followed my own internal compass. Most of the people I've met in life aren't living that way.

The fact of the matter is that there are always going to be people, circumstances and events that you can't change. The only thing you can change and have control over is what they mean to you. These

things that you can't change have to be accepted, but that doesn't mean you have to give up on what you want.

The way to tackle it is to focus on what you *can* control.

“The garden of the world has no limit except in your mind.”

~ Rumi

Focus on the Controllables

You can't control everything in life. You can't control the weather, and ultimately, you can't control other people. You don't have control over what other people think.

What you do have control over are your own actions, and your own thoughts.

Each of us can decide what things mean to us, personally, and what we are going to do about it. It brings you back to the present moment – and the present moment is always where life happens. The future is never here yet, and the past is always gone. We don't have a time machine, so there's nothing we can do in the future or in the past.

In other words – what must I do today? What actions can I take to move the ball forwards, towards achieving my grandest goals and dreams? What actions must I take, day in, and day out? That's the only thing we can control, is what we do and the meanings that we choose to give to the circumstances and events of our lives.

As Master Yoda said,

'Do, or do not, there is no try.'

Life happens *for* you – not *to* you. It's not an accident – everything that happens, happens for a good reason. Life gives you exactly the right circumstances and experiences you need in order to grow into the kind of person you really want to be, and the kind of person you're capable of becoming.

If life happens *to* you, you're basically just a victim of circumstances. You have no say in how things turn out, and all you really have is blind luck. The events of my own life have taught me that this isn't the case. Everything has been divinely orchestrated – even though

you can't always see it that way until long after it has already happened.

There have been plenty of times where I had serious doubts about my future, but I kept going, kept grinding on, and it all became clear afterwards – things happened for a reason. When synchronicity occurs, and it all lines up –you end up getting goose bumps. As Steve Jobs said, things tend to make total sense when you can later look back upon your life and see how all the dots connected perfectly.

“People are not disturbed by things, but by the view they take of things.”

~ Epictetus

A Positive Vision for the Future

“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning.”

~ Benjamin Franklin

There’s a lot of talk in the media about our natural resources – coal, oil and natural gas. Now that Donald Trump is President, the issue has become an even more contentious one because he is making it easy for companies to extract these natural resources and make a profit.

Under the Obama regime, the policy was to make gas and oil exploration incredibly expensive and difficult with red tape – perhaps in the hope that someone in industry would come up with cheaper, and more sustainable alternatives. The reality is that it has had a very different net effect on the economy.

The demand for oil and coal hasn’t reduced. Instead, we simply import more oil and gas from Mexico, the Middle East and everywhere else. Taking dollars circulating in the US economy out of our “pool” and sending them to circulate in foreign economies for resources we have under our feet that we could pay our own people to extract who would pay taxes to the government instead of taking out government welfare and benefits.

Tesla’s Elon Musk has a very different solution. Addressing 30 state governors at the National Governors Association meeting in 2017 he said:

“If you wanted to power the entire United States with solar panels, it would take a fairly small corner of Nevada or Texas or Utah; you

only need about 100 miles by 100 miles of solar panels to power the entire United States,” Musk said during his conversation at an event in Rhode Island, “The batteries you need to store the energy, so you have 24/7 power, is 1 mile by 1 mile. One square-mile.” (Lucchesi, 2017)

That much space would be able to generate all the power we need – and Tesla is already working on making the solution a reality. Currently as little as 10% of the US is powered by renewable energy sources. Tesla has imagined a renewable solar solution, and every year the solar panels are getting cheaper and more efficient.

It makes no sense to be buying foreign oil, and putting people on welfare, while there is such a golden opportunity for advancement in our own back yard. We should be paying our own people to extract oil or gas, or create renewable energy sources instead of emptying the national ‘swimming pool’ of cash flowing in our economy. There’s no reason for the US to be importing oil, gas or coal. If we’re two decades from going over to a completely renewable power source – why are we not exporting more, and making as much money as we can while we can? Why would we want to reduce our economy, and make people suffer unnecessarily, instead of moving positively into the future? When citizens of every country understand money, where it comes from and how it circulates, they can look at how any proposed legislation will affect the money supply in circulation, and therefore their economy, and know whether or not if it’s a good piece of legislation or politician to support.

There are a lot of technological advancements happening right now – and the near future is going to be an exciting place – very different to what we know today.

Autonomous self-driving cars are close to being fully developed and perfected in the next few years. At the same time, Tesla is working on a revolutionary transport solution under the city of Los Angeles. Experts are predicting that it won’t be necessary to own a car within

a few short years. When you need to go somewhere, you just need to call for a self-driving car to take you where you need to be.

We're going to have a large number of people who need to learn new skills, and change what they're doing every day. Cabs, trucks, planes, buses, trains, ships and public transport will be revolutionized. It's now a matter of implementing technologies that are already available.

Let's look at what some of the proposed financial reforms, taxes and legislation the Trump administration wants to implement and how it will affect the money supply in circulation and the overall economy based upon what we've learned about the world's financial system in earlier chapters. It makes financial sense to stop draining the 'pool' by sending huge amounts of money overseas for oil or gas. It's better to stimulate our own economy – increasing the revenues we get in from taxes, and plugging up the holes that are draining the supply. People spend and use money more efficiently than the government does. Lowering taxes gives people more money to spend and circulate before the government takes a cut in taxes. Corporations have over \$3 trillion dollars overseas in profits sitting in foreign banks. Trump is proposing a one-time 10% tax rate to repatriate the money back to the USA so it can be invested in America. This is the net effect of raising taxes on the “evil corporations” leftist politicians always demonize. American workers get fired and the corporation's moved overseas to avoid paying the high US tax rates. They become foreign corporations and pay taxes in the countries that they move to and pay foreign workers instead of American workers. The net effect of these policies will increase the money supply in circulation in the US economy, decrease benefits and welfare payout expenses of the US government, increase tax revenue and employ more people as companies move home and foreign corporations move to the US to take advantage of new lower corporate tax rates.

Out of 320 million people in the US, more than 50 million live on food stamps. It's stupid to spend money elsewhere when our own citizens could be benefiting.

The world will become an even better place when more people are focused on acquiring knowledge, skills and adding value – not while so many are relying on handouts or encouraged or enabled to become dependent on the government or someone or something outside of themselves.

The way technology is going, we are looking at a time when machines and automated systems will provide our food from giant warehouses in every city. On top of that, the advances in genetic science will allow us to grow protein in a much more humane way than we're doing it today. We won't need to slaughter animals, or mistreat them in the cruel ways in which they are mistreated today with mass production of meat, but instead we will be able to grow meat. The BBC recently reported on the first lab-grown hamburger eaten in the UK, and shows how the technology is already at an advanced stage. It's merely a matter of figuring out the mechanics of how to do it cheaper. It's not too far away.

“More and more companies are beginning to produce meat in labs as a way to combat such issues as greenhouse gases emissions, overfishing and animal welfare concerns.” (BBC News, 2017)

“We have enslaved the rest of the animal creation, and have treated our distant cousins in fur and feathers so badly that beyond doubt, if they were able to formulate a religion, they would depict the Devil in human form.”

~ Dr. William Ralph Inge.

Experts talking about the phenomenal growth in AI and robotics, are envisioning a future where robots will do many of the menial tasks of life, allowing us to reduce our working week to 20 hours. This could be less than two decades away.

People will be free to pursue the hobbies and activities that they love. Someone sitting on his porch on the other side of the world could

spend his time making customized, artful furniture for your home, earning enough to survive – and to thrive.

Humankind has to learn to live together in peace, and we can't allow these new technologies to make things worse for us by accident.

In the news recently, there was a story about two computers in the Facebook labs that invented a new kind of language to talk to each other. It was part of an experiment in AI, where two computers were set up to trade with each other – bartering various objects – but they weren't instructed to use only intelligible English. The results shocked and surprised the research team, who quickly shut down the program, and it got the public talking about AI all over again.

The Independent, as well as other leading media picked up on the story quickly:

“The story came after repeated warnings from many of the most respected minds in the world: people including Stephen Hawking have suggested that artificial intelligence could potentially bring about the end of humanity.

Those predictions came to a head days before the story became popular as Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg argued about the dangers of AI – with Mr. Zuckerberg saying that the danger had been overstated, after Mr. Musk has repeatedly suggested that artificial intelligence could take over the world if it is not properly regulated and restrained.” (Griffin, 2017)

Clearly there's still a long way to go – but we're getting closer and closer to true AI every day. Computers already write code more efficiently than humans do – and now they are making up languages of their own.

New materials like Graphene, advances in 3D printing, and the exponential growth of computer power are set to change the way the world works. You can just imagine that as it keeps growing, we may

be able to design our houses online, and have machines show up to build our new home within hours. 3D printed and pre-manufactured houses are already being built. If you need to renovate your house, software will be able to run you through a virtual 3D tour of the changes, and the same day machines will show up to carry out the work. Later that day your alterations are done.

Things like this are no longer on the distant horizon – they're here, and they will become more and more commonplace in our lifetimes. It's mind-boggling. We are going to have machines building machines. Look at how the military has changed over the last few years, using high-tech gear, drones, and all manner of new technology for warfare.

When robots are making robots – who knows what could happen, if there is a mistake, a hack or a deliberate attempt to misuse this power. We have to find a way to deal with these challenges, and live together in peace as a global society before we destroy ourselves.

The future is bright and hopeful – provided that we make sure that this technology enables people to live in the way they want to live. The progress needs to stay people-centric.

It should help people to pay their bills, to travel, learn and expand their minds – to have relationships with the kind of people they want to. It should enable people to live up to their full potential, in abundance and in ease, in harmony with the planet. Technology will be able to make things so much cheaper than they are today.

Human beings are set to become a multi-planetary species – within the next few decades at most.

Elon Musk's vision for SpaceX is exciting and inspiring. There have been about a dozen successful launches and landings – and they are working on re-usable rockets. That will significantly cut the costs of space travel. Imagine that if every time you used a 747 jetliner, you threw away the plane afterwards. The price of tickets would be

insane. That's what happened with rockets – until someone like Elon Musk came along and asked – why?

Space travel will become affordable in the future. Can you imagine the kind of society, and the kind of world we're headed for? Can you imagine being able to live for hundreds of years? You could move to the moon for a few decades and study rocks, or practice low-gravity golf. You could go to Mars, and build a cool place to stay. You could go to the moons of Saturn for a while.

Elon Musk is totally right. If humanity continues to pursue war, conflict and allow the decay of society in the Third world, instead of using technology to create abundance across the globe, we're going to end up destroying ourselves.

The future is exciting, but it can be daunting too.

In order to make sure our children, and the generations that follow us have the best possible chance at a good future, we need more than just clever technology.

We need to learn from our past, and pay attention to both the constructive, and the destructive lessons in history. We need to collectively take part in the building of a society that upholds the best values. We need to instill those values, first into our own hearts and minds, and then into the hearts and minds of our children.

I recently came across an inspiring video clip on YouTube by Dr. Peter Gray, a research professor at Boston College, and the author of the book: *Free to Learn*. His ideas on how to inspire kids to learn fit so perfectly with the things I've learned growing up, and are expressed so clearly that I would like to share his "six conditions to optimize children's ability to educate themselves."

(Gray, 2017)

(You can find the video on YouTube, if you search for “Peter Gray, Self-Directed Learning Fundamentals”)

Firstly, *Education is the child’s responsibility*. When children are made to understand that it’s up to them to educate themselves, (using the tools you’ve provided for them), they tend to take that responsibility to heart. If, instead, they are led to believe that someone else (a parent or teacher, for example) is responsible for their education, they’re only going to put in the minimum effort, and do only what they’re told to do. They will tend to see learning as a chore, instead of as fun.

Give Kids an Unlimited opportunity to play, and explore their own interests. An hour or two of freedom per day simply isn’t enough. It takes time for ideas to form, for kids to try out new things, for them to get bored, and try something else. There’s no rush. In order for them to find their passion, they need ample opportunity to play and experiment in peace.

Let kids play with the tools of the culture. In hunter-gatherer times kids would play with bows and arrows, knives, fire stones, digging sticks and all kinds of things that were laying around – and they assimilated these objects into their lives, and became one with them. The tools were natural extensions of their bodies and minds. Today the most important tool is probably the computer – and kids instinctively want to play with them, perhaps sensing how important such things will be in their future. So let them become comfortable around those tools. Let those tools grow into their lives until they are completely natural.

Access to a variety of caring adults that are helpers not judges. The last person you want to learn from is someone who is judging and evaluating you as a person. That just makes you feel nervous. Kids need to feel free and confident enough to ask silly questions, without being judged. Kids who have access to caring grown-ups who don’t judge them will learn better.

Free mixing among children of different ages. Kids don't learn too much from other kids the same age. They learn more from older kids, and even from younger kids. It gives them a far more balanced perspective.

Immersion in a stable, moral, democratic, community. When kids come to see that their ideas and actions influence the other people in their community, they learn to understand how people can help, support, and encourage each other. They learn to feel connected to their community, and to actually care about it.

Imagine living in a society where everyone believes in you, everyone wants to support you, and everyone in a global human tribe learns to accept each other's differences, and to get along in peace and harmony.

That challenge is perhaps more difficult to achieve than inventing self-driving cars. The way towards a future like that is through love.

There's a beautiful story from a little-known tribe that comes from Zambia in Southern Africa. It was originally picked up by Dr. Wayne Dyer, and it has been shared by others, including Alice Walker, in her book: *"Sent by Earth: A Message from the Grandmother Spirit after the Bombing of the World Trade Center and Pentagon."*

"In the Babemba tribe, when a person acts irresponsibly or unjustly, he or she is placed in the center of the village, alone and unfettered. All work ceases, the entire village gathers around the accused individual, then each person of every age begins to talk out loud to the accused.

One at a time each person tells all the good things that the one in the center ever did in his or her lifetime. Every incident, every experience that can be recalled with any detail and accuracy is recounted. All positive attributes, good deeds, strengths and acts of kindness are recited carefully and at length.

No one is permitted to fabricate, to exaggerate or to be facetious about the accomplishments or the positive aspects of the accused person. The tribal ceremony often lasts several days, not ceasing until everyone is drained of every positive comment that can be mustered.

At the end, the tribal circle is broken, a joyous celebration takes place, and the person is symbolically welcomed back into the tribe. The necessity for such ceremonies is rare; it only occurs once in every 4 or 5 years.” (Dyer, 2006)

I found this story inspiring – because it shows us an alternative.

Instead of dragging people into a bureaucratic, corrupted legal system, where there is almost no chance for someone to rehabilitate their spirit, or find a way back into the folds of the community, these people focus on love instead.

Imagine if you stood up in front of a judge in court, while your entire neighborhood community gets to talk about all the good things you’ve done in the past. Would you still want to pursue a life of crime if you had a support system of people who wanted you to succeed and had access to the resources, tools, and knowledge you needed to develop your skills and talents?

60 Minutes did a fascinating story titled, “Crime and Punishment” on the German prison system and how they focus not on punishing prisoners, but rehabilitation and re-integration by helping them to lead a normal life as much as possible in a controlled environment so they eventually become productive members of society instead of treating them like caged animals like we do all too often in America. Many US politicians, and prison and corrections officials are working with their German counterparts to see how they can replicate and incorporate some of their program successes in the US prison system.

To me, that’s what a positive vision of the future looks like – and the road towards that goal starts with each and every individual person

on the planet taking responsibility for their own lives – and learning to master themselves and their destinies. In the words of The Founding Fathers of the United States of America, “live free or die!”

Mastering yourself is the way to truly set yourself free so you can become all that you are capable of being and reach your full potential.

I’d like to finish this section with something that made a lot of sense to me, when I first read it, and something that I believe captures the kind of mindset that will lead us to a bright and sustainable future as a species. It is from a Shawnee Nation tradition, and it’s beautifully expressed:

“So live your life that the fear of death can never enter your heart. Trouble no one about their religion; respect others in their view, and demand that they respect yours. Love your life, perfect your life, beautify all things in your life. Seek to make your life long and its purpose in the service of your people. Prepare a noble death song for the day when you go over the great divide.

Always give a word or a sign of salute when meeting or passing a friend, even a stranger, when in a lonely place. Show respect to all people and grovel to none.

When you arise in the morning give thanks for the food and for the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies only in yourself. Abuse no one and no thing, for abuse turns the wise ones to fools and robs the spirit of its vision.

When it comes your time to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with the fear of death, so that when their time comes they weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song and die like a hero going home.”

~ Chief Tecumseh. 1768-1813 Shawnee Nation.

“Truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains taken to bring it to light.”

~ George Washington

Conclusion

The future is never set in stone. We can choose to create whatever kind of future we want.

What do you want to create for yourself? What kind of life and lifestyle do you really want? How do you plan on adding value to the world? What are your grandest goals and dreams? What can you find to be grateful for in your life right now? What makes your soul truly come alive on the inside? What do you really want to do, even though the thought of actually doing or attempting it scares the crap out of you? What would you do, or what would you start today if you knew you couldn't fail? What **MUST** you accomplish before your life is over?

Fear can serve as a master motivator to get you to move away from undesirable outcomes and towards emotionally compelling ones, or it can dominate and hijack your life, trapping you in mediocrity and fooling you into living a life that is far less than what you are capable of living.

Scarcity leads to lack, fear, anger, or worse: survival mode, violence and force. People in survival mode will take by force what they feel they are not receiving abundantly or willingly from life or from other people.

Abundance, on the other hand, leads to a feeling of peace, joy, gratitude and contentment. Abundance leads to the desire to contribute to others and share what you have too much of, simply because it brings you joy to give. That's what love is anyway. Love is about giving because it is your gift that requires nothing in return.

It is a scientific fact that a random act of kindness towards another human being causes the serotonin level of the receiver to increase. The serotonin level of the giver also increases as a result. It is also a scientific fact that an observer of a random act of kindness also

experiences a serotonin level increase. Being kind and doing great things that set your soul on fire, makes the world a better place, and it is the best kind of natural anti-depressant. Contribution, our sixth human need, fulfills all other five human needs simultaneously. Giving your best to your life and the world inspires others, and unconsciously gives them the permission to do the same. This is the embodiment of living and leading by example.

People, who can't get laid, make money, get a good job or live a good life, eventually become fearful, frustrated and angry. This can lead to dark places and doing evil things for the weak minded, uneducated or unenlightened. When they don't believe in themselves, they look for others to believe in. They also look for validation and justification for their model of the world or worldview. When you don't believe in yourself or understand the fundamentals of the science of achievement, that this book teaches, you can't get what you want or create the life and lifestyle that you want.

Resentment starts to build and all of us naturally look for someone or something to blame that is outside of ourselves. Why? This is how we absolve ourselves from any personal responsibility or blame for our lives not being the way we want.

Anyone offering a quick fix, free shit or a bad guy to blame will seem reasonable. When people don't stand for anything or believe in themselves, they are easier to manipulate and control. As Neale Donald Walsch says, "We see ourselves as the victim, rather than the creator, of our present situation. This is why our world is so difficult to change." I loved how Dr. Wayne Dyer said that, no matter where we are in life, we could take great comfort in knowing that our best thinking got us there. Problems can't be solved by the same kind of thinking that created them.

The harsh reality of life is that nobody really gives a fuck about your problems or mine. Everyone has his or her own struggles and challenges. If you want to be the best and experience the best, you

must make it happen for yourself and assume that no one is coming to save you or to make life easy for you.

We all have the same amount of hours in the day, but all of us either use it efficiently, or we waste it. As Ray Dalio mentions in his book, “Principles,” you should endeavor to “struggle well.” Life is often a struggle, but the idea is to struggle well as you traverse your own personal journey to creating your ideal life and lifestyle. Struggling well means enjoying your life as you live it, in the most balanced way possible, while still pushing your boundaries and comfort zone so you can reach your full potential.

We can only become more when we step beyond what we have been in the past.

With a more stable and balanced monetary system, with a higher percentage of people living at peak performance levels and being engaged in a life’s work that is emotionally compelling to them, everyone everywhere will live better and prosper more. In just a few short decades, the world could be a five star paradise everywhere you go. Technology will make growing and making the bare necessities of life affordable, available and economical for all human beings, no matter where you live on Earth, or in outer space for that matter.

Back when tally sticks were the currency in England, people only needed to work 3 or 4 months per year to provide all they needed financially for the entire year. In their spare time, people studied, traveled, learned, practiced, contemplated, experimented and simply enjoyed their lives.

When people are free to spend the majority of their time the way they want to, they tend to spend it learning or mastering something that is exciting and compelling to them.

Gaining control of my time has enabled me to study and master things I was weak or inexperienced at. Knowledge truly does pay the

best interest and offers the highest rate of return for your time and money - provided that you apply what you learn.

My life has had many ups and downs. It's a powerful thing to know you can get any job you want, date the caliber of lover you want, build the kind of business you want, have great health free of common colds and illnesses and full of energy and vitality, and to create the life and lifestyle you want if you are willing to put the work and time in. You're either a doer or a talker. Doers take action while talkers simply talk, but never take any action to shape and change their destiny.

We all need to care and do what we can to make the world a better place. My destiny is linked to yours and vice versa. I'm going to save your life and you're going to save mine. We're all in this together. You and I as well as everyone else, are collectively building the world that our children are going to inherit. The greatest wish of every parent is to see his or her child live a better life than they did. We must find a way to make it a little better, safer and more prosperous than we found it. Commit or re-commit to the process of being successful and trying to get a little better each and every day. Repetition after all, is the mother of skill.

Be kind to yourself. Notice how you talk to yourself. Be patient with yourself and your progress. Allow yourself to be a beginner each and every day. Every day the slate is wiped clean and you have the opportunity to begin again to move your life forward, or to do nothing. Every day you make a conscious choice to either show up and make things happen, or to check out and make excuses.

My life's work is my way of being of service to you and everyone else who finds value in it. It's my way of trying to humbly 'wash your feet' in the most humble act of service and value that I can offer. Similar in a way to how Jesus, our elder brother showed us to be of the highest level of service. An ultimate act of humility on his part, his way of saying, that he wasn't any more or less important

than anyone else. We all matter to the Creator. We are all magnificent, special and valued in the eyes of the Lord. Life is a gift. The purpose of it is to find a way to enjoy it and make your life an act of service to your fellow man. I think Saint Francis said it best...

“Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life. Amen.” ~ The Prayer of Saint Francis

The Noble Ideas that Preserve our Freedom

America's Founding Documents

The few pages of text that make up the founding documents of the United States of America are some of the most noble, well-designed and glorious ideas that you will ever read. I wanted to include them as an appendix to this book, because I believe everybody should read them at least once. The great Abraham Lincoln said:

“Let [the Constitution] be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling books and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in the legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation.”

The reality is that at the end of the day, Abraham Lincoln saved our republic. If it weren't for him, the world would look completely different than it does today. The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights are the foundation stones of our ideological stronghold, and the ideas that give people the freedom to become masters of themselves.

200 years after they were written, they still shine out as guiding lights for all human beings. These words have done so much to ensure that the US is still the best country, and has done more to lift people out of poverty than any other system in the history of mankind.

“Don't interfere with anything in the Constitution. That must be maintained, for it is the only safeguard of our liberties.”

~ Abraham Lincoln

The Declaration of Independence: A Transcription

Note: The following text is a transcription of the Stone Engraving of the parchment Declaration of Independence (the document on display in the Rotunda at the National Archives Museum.) The spelling and punctuation reflects the original.

In Congress, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their

duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

The Constitution of the United States: A Transcription

Note: The following text is a transcription of the Constitution as it was inscribed by Jacob Shallus on parchment (the document on display in the Rotunda at the National Archives Museum.) The spelling and punctuation reflect the original.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article. I.

Section. 1.

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section. 2.

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for

a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to choose three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

Section. 3.

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the Recess of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall chuse their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the Absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States: but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.

Section. 4.

The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of chusing Senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by Law appoint a different Day.

Section. 5.

Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members, and a Majority of each shall constitute a Quorum to do Business; but a smaller Number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the Attendance of absent Members, in such Manner, and under such Penalties as each House may provide.

Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member.

Each House shall keep a Journal of its Proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such Parts as may in their Judgment require Secrecy; and the Yeas and Nays of the Members of either House on any question shall, at the Desire of one fifth of those Present, be entered on the Journal.

Neither House, during the Session of Congress, shall, without the Consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other Place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

Section. 6.

The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, to be ascertained by Law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. They shall in all Cases, except Treason, Felony and Breach of the Peace, be privileged from Arrest during their Attendance at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other Place.

No Senator or Representative shall, during the Time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil Office under the Authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the Emoluments whereof shall have been encreased during such time; and no Person

holding any Office under the United States, shall be a Member of either House during his Continuance in Office.

Section. 7.

All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with Amendments as on other Bills.

Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his Objections to that House in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the Objections at large on their Journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such Reconsideration two thirds of that House shall agree to pass the Bill, it shall be sent, together with the Objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two thirds of that House, it shall become a Law. But in all such Cases the Votes of both Houses shall be determined by yeas and Nays, and the Names of the Persons voting for and against the Bill shall be entered on the Journal of each House respectively. If any Bill shall not be returned by the President within ten Days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the Same shall be a Law, in like Manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their Adjournment prevent its Return, in which Case it shall not be a Law.

Every Order, Resolution, or Vote to which the Concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of Adjournment) shall be presented to the President of the United States; and before the Same shall take Effect, shall be approved by him, or being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the Rules and Limitations prescribed in the Case of a Bill.

Section. 8.

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;—
And

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

Section. 9.

The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.

The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.

No Bill of Attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed.

No Capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census or enumeration herein before directed to be taken.

No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State.

No Preference shall be given by any Regulation of Commerce or Revenue to the Ports of one State over those of another: nor shall Vessels bound to, or from, one State, be obliged to enter, clear, or pay Duties in another.

No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.

No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.

Section. 10.

No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation; grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal; coin Money; emit Bills of Credit; make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts; pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts, or grant any Title of Nobility.

No State shall, without the Consent of the Congress, lay any Imposts or Duties on Imports or Exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing it's inspection Laws: and the net Produce of all Duties and Imposts, laid by any State on Imports or Exports, shall

be for the Use of the Treasury of the United States; and all such Laws shall be subject to the Revision and Controul of the Congress.

No State shall, without the Consent of Congress, lay any Duty of Tonnage, keep Troops, or Ships of War in time of Peace, enter into any Agreement or Compact with another State, or with a foreign Power, or engage in War, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent Danger as will not admit of delay.

Article. II.

Section. 1.

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows

Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each; which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall, in the Presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the Certificates, and the Votes shall then be counted. The Person having the greatest Number of Votes shall be the President, if such Number be a Majority of the whole Number of Electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such Majority, and have an equal Number

of Votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately chuse by Ballot one of them for President; and if no Person have a Majority, then from the five highest on the List the said House shall in like Manner chuse the President. But in chusing the President, the Votes shall be taken by States, the Representation from each State having one Vote; A quorum for this Purpose shall consist of a Member or Members from two thirds of the States, and a Majority of all the States shall be necessary to a Choice. In every Case, after the Choice of the President, the Person having the greatest Number of Votes of the Electors shall be the Vice President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal Votes, the Senate shall chuse from them by Ballot the Vice President.

The Congress may determine the Time of chusing the Electors, and the Day on which they shall give their Votes; which Day shall be the same throughout the United States.

No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any Person be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty five Years, and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States.

In Case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office, the Same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by Law provide for the Case of Removal, Death, Resignation or Inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what Officer shall then act as President, and such Officer shall act accordingly, until the Disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.

The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be encreased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall

not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Section. 2.

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

The President shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the Senate, by granting Commissions which shall expire at the End of their next Session.

Section. 3.

He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.

Section. 4.

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

Article III.

Section. 1.

The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of the supreme and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good Behaviour, and shall, at stated Times, receive for their Services, a Compensation, which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.

Section. 2.

The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, the Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority;—to all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls;—to all Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction;—to

Controversies to which the United States shall be a Party;—to Controversies between two or more States;— between a State and Citizens of another State,—between Citizens of different States,— between Citizens of the same State claiming Lands under Grants of different States, and between a State, or the Citizens thereof, and foreign States, Citizens or Subjects.

In all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, and those in which a State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have original Jurisdiction. In all the other Cases before mentioned, the supreme Court shall have appellate Jurisdiction, both as to Law and Fact, with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make.

The Trial of all Crimes, except in Cases of Impeachment, shall be by Jury; and such Trial shall be held in the State where the said Crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any State, the Trial shall be at such Place or Places as the Congress may by Law have directed.

Section. 3.

Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.

The Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason, but no Attainder of Treason shall work Corruption of Blood, or Forfeiture except during the Life of the Person attainted.

Article. IV.

Section. 1.

Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general Laws prescribe the Manner in which such Acts, Records and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof.

Section. 2.

The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States.

A Person charged in any State with Treason, Felony, or other Crime, who shall flee from Justice, and be found in another State, shall on Demand of the executive Authority of the State from which he fled, be delivered up, to be removed to the State having Jurisdiction of the Crime.

No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.

Section. 3.

New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress.

The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall

be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

Section. 4.

The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened), against domestic Violence.

Article. V.

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate.

Article. VI.

All Debts contracted and Engagements entered into, before the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation.

This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound

thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

Article. VII.

The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.

The Word, "the," being interlined between the seventh and eighth Lines of the first Page, The Word "Thirty" being partly written on an Erasure in the fifteenth Line of the first Page, The Words "is tried" being interlined between the thirty second and thirty third Lines of the first Page and the Word "the" being interlined between the forty third and forty fourth Lines of the second Page.

Attest William Jackson Secretary

done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth In witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names,

G°. Washington

Presidt and deputy from Virginia

The Bill of Rights

The first 10 amendments to the Constitution make up the Bill of Rights. Written by James Madison in response to calls from several states for greater constitutional protection for individual liberties, the Bill of Rights lists specific prohibitions on governmental power.

What is an amendment?

An amendment to the Constitution is an improvement, a correction or a revision to the original content approved in 1788. To date, 27 Amendments have been approved, six have been disapproved and thousands have been discussed.

How is the Constitution amended? Article V of the Constitution prescribes how an amendment can become a part of the Constitution. While there are two ways, only one has ever been used. All 27 Amendments have been ratified after two-thirds of the House and Senate approve of the proposal and send it to the states for a vote. Then, three-fourths of the states must affirm the proposed Amendment.

The other method of passing an amendment requires a Constitutional Convention to be called by two-thirds of the legislatures of the States. That Convention can propose as many amendments as it deems necessary. Those amendments must be approved by three-fourths of the states.

THE Conventions of a number of the States, having at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added: And as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government, will best ensure the beneficent ends of its institution.

RESOLVED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, two thirds of both

Houses concurring, that the following Articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all, or any of which Articles, when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of the said Constitution; viz.

ARTICLES in addition to, and Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and ratified by the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution.

Note: The following text is a transcription of the first ten amendments to the Constitution in their original form. These amendments were ratified December 15, 1791, and form what is known as the "Bill of Rights."

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment II

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.

Amendment VII

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

The Constitution: Amendments 11-27

Constitutional Amendments 1-10 make up what is known as The Bill of Rights. Amendments 11-27 are listed below.

Amendment XI

Passed by Congress March 4, 1794. Ratified February 7, 1795.

Note: Article III, section 2, of the Constitution was modified by amendment 11. The Judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by Citizens of another State, or by Citizens or Subjects of any Foreign State.

Amendment XII

Passed by Congress December 9, 1803. Ratified June 15, 1804.

Note: A portion of Article II, section 1 of the Constitution was superseded by the 12th amendment. The Electors shall meet in their respective states and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice-President, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President, and of all persons voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate; -- the President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted; -- The person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the

list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice. [And if the House of Representatives shall not choose a President whenever the right of choice shall devolve upon them, before the fourth day of March next following, then the Vice-President shall act as President, as in case of the death or other constitutional disability of the President. --]* The person having the greatest number of votes as Vice-President, shall be the Vice-President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed, and if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list, the Senate shall choose the Vice-President; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two-thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States. *Superseded by section 3 of the 20th amendment.

Amendment XIII

Passed by Congress January 31, 1865. Ratified December 6, 1865.

Note: A portion of Article IV, section 2, of the Constitution was superseded by the 13th amendment.

Section 1.

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XIV

Passed by Congress June 13, 1866. Ratified July 9, 1868.

Note: Article I, section 2, of the Constitution was modified by section 2 of the 14th amendment.

Section 1.

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2.

Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice-President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age,* and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

Section 3.

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Section 4.

The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

*Changed by section 1 of the 26th amendment.

Amendment XV

Passed by Congress February 26, 1869. Ratified February 3, 1870.

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude--

Section 2.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XVI

Passed by Congress July 2, 1909. Ratified February 3, 1913.

Note: Article I, section 9, of the Constitution was modified by amendment 16.

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

Amendment XVII

Passed by Congress May 13, 1912. Ratified April 8, 1913.

Note: Article I, section 3, of the Constitution was modified by the 17th amendment.

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote. The electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislatures.

When vacancies happen in the representation of any State in the Senate, the executive authority of such State shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: Provided, That the legislature of any State may empower the executive thereof to make temporary

appointments until the people fill the vacancies by election as the legislature may direct.

This amendment shall not be so construed as to affect the election or term of any Senator chosen before it becomes valid as part of the Constitution.

Amendment XVIII

Passed by Congress December 18, 1917. Ratified January 16, 1919.
Repealed by amendment 21.

Section 1.

After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

Section 2.

The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Section 3.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

Amendment XIX

Passed by Congress June 4, 1919. Ratified August 18, 1920.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XX

Passed by Congress March 2, 1932. Ratified January 23, 1933.

Note: Article I, section 4, of the Constitution was modified by section 2 of this amendment. In addition, a portion of the 12th amendment was superseded by section 3.

Section 1.

The terms of the President and the Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon on the 3rd day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

Section 2.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3d day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Section 3.

If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President elect shall have died, the Vice President elect shall become President. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President elect nor a Vice President elect shall have qualified, declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accordingly until a President or Vice President shall have qualified.

Section 4.

The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.

Section 5.

Sections 1 and 2 shall take effect on the 15th day of October following the ratification of this article.

Section 6.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission.

Amendment XXI

Passed by Congress February 20, 1933. Ratified December 5, 1933.

Section 1.

The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed.

Section 2.

The transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.

Section 3.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by conventions in the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

Amendment XXII

Passed by Congress March 21, 1947. Ratified February 27, 1951.

Section 1.

No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once. But this Article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this Article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this Article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.

Section 2.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission to the States by the Congress.

Amendment XXIII

Passed by Congress June 16, 1960. Ratified March 29, 1961.

Section 1.

The District constituting the seat of Government of the United States shall appoint in such manner as the Congress may direct:

A number of electors of President and Vice President equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives in Congress to which the District would be entitled if it were a State, but in no event more than the least populous State; they shall be in addition to those appointed by the States, but they shall be considered, for the purposes of the election of President and Vice President, to be electors appointed by a State; and they shall meet in the District and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.

Section 2.

The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXIV

Passed by Congress August 27, 1962. Ratified January 23, 1964.

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

Section 2.

The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXV

Passed by Congress July 6, 1965. Ratified February 10, 1967.

Note: Article II, section 1, of the Constitution was affected by the 25th amendment.

Section 1.

In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President.

Section 2.

Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress.

Section 3.

Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.

Section 4.

Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

Thereafter, when the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that no inability exists, he shall resume the powers and duties of his office unless the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive department or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit within four days to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the

Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. Thereupon Congress shall decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours for that purpose if not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days after receipt of the latter written declaration, or, if Congress is not in session, within twenty-one days after Congress is required to assemble, determines by two-thirds vote of both Houses that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall continue to discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall resume the powers and duties of his office.

Amendment XXVI

Passed by Congress March 23, 1971. Ratified July 1, 1971.

Note: Amendment 14, section 2, of the Constitution was modified by section 1 of the 26th amendment.

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Section 2.

The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXVII

Originally proposed Sept. 25, 1789. Ratified May 7, 1992.

No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.

Coaching Services

If you know of anyone that you think may be interested in this book, or could benefit from what you have read here, please send them to my website, UnderstandingRelationships.com

If you have read this book, and you really need some help integrating these concepts, or need some help to turn things around in your life fast, I also do one-on-one phone and Skype coaching on a first come, first serve basis, as my schedule permits. You will find the information on phone and Skype coaching on my website at UnderstandingRelationships.com/products. I am happy to help you, and help any others to find the power in their lives that I have found in mine. I salute you for having the courage to take your power back, and become the person you were meant to be.

About the Ghostwriter for this book:

Wayne Bloemhof lives in South Africa, and specializes in Ghostwriting on subjects like the ones in this book. He has written for a variety of inspirational people – Life Coaches, psychologists, and self-development gurus, and has published his own book: *Cultivating a Natural State of Mind*

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I hired Wayne to be the Ghostwriter of my 2nd book. It was a self-help/self-reliance book to help people find their true calling and reach their full potential. Out of everyone who quoted the project or expressed interest in being my ghostwriter, Wayne was the only one who actually took the time to read my project description and then write a detailed letter to me explaining why he wanted to do my project and why he felt he was the perfect fit. He had a similar spiritual journey of self-discovery that led to his becoming a full time writer that reminded me of my own path and how I became a full time life coach. He did extensive research and properly quoted all sources used in my book to ensure it was accurate and reflective of many significant historical events related to my book's material. He did an outstanding job of taking my audio recordings, personal life story and book outline to write my book so it made me feel like it was my words, because they actually were. We worked together for six months from start to finish. I definitely plan on using him for my next book, which will be more of an entrepreneurship, sales, business and marketing book.

Coach Corey Wayne.

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“Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny, and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day.”
~ Thomas Jefferson

